



Microsoft Xbox's YouTube Launch Broadcast Helps Halo 5: Guardians Break Sales Records

For Halo 5: Guardians, it was game (launch) time. This time, Microsoft Xbox wanted to connect with fans old and new in a whole new way. With YouTube, Microsoft Xbox hosted a six-hour event that was watched live as it was streamed by 700,000 people and helped Halo 5 break sales records.

The Challenge

This wasn't going to be just any old launch party. Microsoft Xbox wanted to encourage long-term fans to rethink what they knew about Halo *and* spur interest among people who hadn't played the game before. Xbox would have to do something gamers had never seen before, and it had to be big enough to reach more people than its traditional standalone launch events.

The Approach

Reaching gamers where they spend their time: YouTube

Gamers may debate their loyalty to the Master Chief vs. Spartan Locke, but where they come together is YouTube. [YouTube is gamers' #1 destination for finding the content that influences their purchasing decisions.](#)

Traditional launch events, while successful in driving local excitement, lacked the reach needed to engage a worldwide audience. As a global brand, it was crucial

that Microsoft Xbox launch Halo 5: Guardians in a way that engaged its entire network of fans.

To meet gamers' high expectations for how brands should engage with them and to kick off Halo 5 in style, Xbox and its studio team, 343 Industries, put together a six-hour live [launch event](#) on YouTube. The event featured pre produced packages, [YouTube stars](#), developers explaining different components of the game, game demos, and live feeds from supplementary Microsoft store launch events in New York and Los Angeles. Similar to a New Year's Eve countdown show, viewers could pop in at any time and find engaging content.

Hosting the event on YouTube allowed for mass scale and viewer interactivity. Fans could like, share, and comment on the event as it was happening.



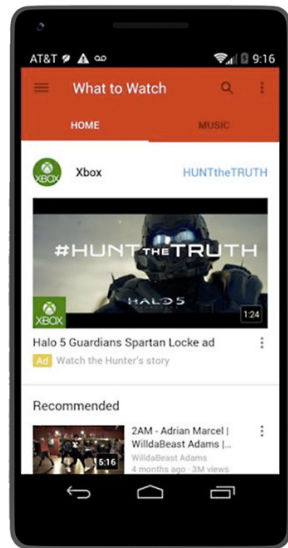
Halo 5: Live

YouTube media drives viewers to the live broadcast

Creating something that had never been done before [landed Xbox in the Guinness Book of World Records](#), but it also meant that it would have to get the word out in a big way. Gamers weren't primed to seek out a live launch broadcast, so Xbox had to create awareness and drum up enthusiasm.

The media campaign featured a series of TrueView ads and [YouTube desktop and mobile homepage mastheads](#). The desktop version offered Xbox a robust creative space to showcase the game trailer and achieved 42M impressions. The mobile version was used on launch day (more than half of YouTube views come from mobile)¹ and achieved 128M impressions and 36.6K clicks to the live video. Director of Client Services, Jeremy Kraus.

"Partnering with YouTube uniquely allowed us to reach a broader, more diverse consumer than just people who are on Xbox, or fans of Xbox today," said Xbox's General Manager of Games Marketing Aaron Greenberg.



Mobile mastheads helped Xbox reach engaged viewers on launch day.

Xbox incorporated contextual and behavioral targeting to reach potential viewers with TrueView and Search ads. Fifteen different videos were used in the TrueView campaign, generating 23M views and 32M minutes of watchtime (the equivalent of 61 years).

YouTube served as the campaign's hub. People who were on Xbox.com, social channels, paid promotions, and even people using Xbox consoles were sent to the live event on YouTube. Greenberg said, "We were trying to drive everyone across all of our own channels to this single destination. I think that's the only way you can get scale, reach, and engagement at the level that we did."

Google's Industry Head, Technology, Nate Brooling, added, "YouTube is the premier destination for gamers, publishers, and developers. We were fortunate enough to work with the Xbox team on this industry-first livestream event. Together we tapped into the potential of the platform and engaged millions of excited fans."

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"With YouTube, the scale, matched with the ability to reach our fans no matter where they are or what device they're on, is unique. Our desktop and mobile mastheads were seen over 169 million times—that's unique scale that's pretty special to YouTube." Greenberg said.

All this promotion did the trick. The event became the most-watched video game launch ever with 700,000 people who tuned in live, 1.14M who watched the full show live or after the fact, and 8M who watched some portion of the show.

Products

YouTube Mastheads: Desktop and Mobile

TrueView

Google Search

The Results

700K

people watched
the complete
live event

8M

watched
some portion
of the show

#1

fastest-ever-
selling Xbox
digital game in
opening week

\$5B

Halo 5: Guardians
pushed the
franchise to over
\$5B in sales

24M

views of
TrueView promo
videos across all
assets for Halo 5
campaign

Source

¹ YouTube global data, June 2014.