



How to Balance Facebook Video in the News Feed



by Liam Corcoran

We all know that Facebook video is booming, but how can publishers make the most of the format to ensure consistent engagement?

At the [ONA London](#) conference in April 2016, NewsWhip Head of Communications Liam Corcoran talked about the rise in engagement with Facebook video for different publishers, including BBC, CNN, Vox and more.

The talk touched on some of the findings from our data deep-dive into the video numbers that Newswhip’s [previously published on the blog](#). You can see the full presentation [here](#).

Since then, some number crunching through [NewsWhip Analytics](#) has shown us that average share rates for video on Facebook far outstrip other formats, such as links and images.

Here’s what the average share rate looked like for each format in February 2016, with data for each publisher’s main Facebook page.

Average share rate per post type, February 2016



Links: 530
Photos: 641
Video: 1,417

Links: 836
Photos: 1,348
Video: 4,731

Links: 150
Photos: -
Video: 2,798

One of the main issues that publishers face when addressing Facebook video is that the engagement rates tend to coalesce at the very top.

That’s to say that the most viral videos get traction, while the smaller ones take longer to pick up traction and engagement on social media.

This chart shows this trend for the three sample publishers:

Top 5 video shares as % of total, February 2016

		
Total Videos: 197	Videos: 313	Videos: 96
Total Shares: 279,159	Shares: 1,480,773	Shares: 268,591
Top 5: 151,530 (54%)	Top 5: 966,112 (65%)	Top5: 203,690 (76%)

For context, the comparative chart for links from the three sites in February 2016:

Top 5 articles as % of total, February 2016

		
Total articles: 11,005	Articles: 4,472	Videos: 96
Total Shares: 2,100,516	Shares: 2,005,661	Shares: 516,010
Top 5: 44,935 (2%)	Top 5: 84,391 (4%)	Top 5: 136,602 (26%)

Of course, these sites are all producing more articles each month than native videos, but the variance in numbers is interesting.

In February, Vox’s five best performing Facebook videos accounted for 76% of their total engagements. Their most shared video featured editor Ezra Klein talking about Donald Trump, and was shared over 100,000 times, or almost 25% of the total.



Donald Trump's rise is a scary moment in America
Posted by Vox
7,791,956 Views

Donald Trump's rise is a scary moment in America

America is getting frighteningly close to electing a reality TV star president.

👍 37K 💬 5.3K ➔ 103K

The numbers go some way to illustrating the role that the Facebook's algorithm potentially plays in the spread and promotion of video on Facebook.

While it's obvious that Facebook have been promoting and rewarding use of native video in news feeds over the past two years, publishers are sometime left wondering how best to promote their videos to followers.

While we know that when a user takes an action on a piece of content in their news feed by commenting or sharing, there's a higher likelihood of them seeing more content from that source in future, it's unclear how much of a boost to future engagement these actions may lead to.

In short, publishers can leave themselves open to a lopsided engagement strategy with video if they rely too heavily on the success of their strongest videos.

And even at this level, the numbers aren't all that unusual. Some viral sites see engagements of up to 90% for their most successful videos each month. In short, aiming simply to 'go viral' is not an effective strategy.

NowThis Editor [Sarah Frank](#) shared some great advice for helping to combat this effect on Friday: by analyzing the lower-performing videos, rather than the mega-viral, it's easier to figure out how to improve for next time.



As publishers get more adept at producing and promoting video on Facebook, it seems likely we'll see more even distribution of engagements – possibly at the expense of other formats.

[Try Spike to see the best performing videos on Facebook](#)