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WHO IS THE REAL VIDEO CHAMPION?

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Sky John owes much of his early Internet fame to YouTube, where he's amassed nearly 3 million subscribers to his cocktail tutorial channel.

But more recently, John has switched up the recipe, **posting clips on Facebook**. The result? Millions more views and more people stopping him in public.

"That's what turned me on to **Facebook** -- when people would recognise me at the supermarket," the 36-year-old former Barney's Beanery bartender said.

John credits the change to the ease with which users can share his **videos on Facebook**, increasing the chances his products go viral.

He's the type of closely followed **video** creator **Facebook** is now trying to appeal to at this year's conference of digital stars, fans and advertisers known as VidCon.

In the last year, the Menlo Park, California, company has doubled its daily **video** views to 8 billion and rolled out **Facebook Live**, a live-streaming service that's quickly building momentum, having already attracted celebrities and big-name publishers.

At VidCon, a three-day event in Anaheim that starts June 23, **Facebook** will get to hear firsthand from the top YouTubers, Viners and Snapchatters, among others, about what they want from a **video** platform.

"The goal and plan is to spend time there listening and talking with creators and the creative community, who are there in massive numbers," said Sibyl Goldman, **Facebook's** head of entertainment partnerships. "We want to get as much feedback as we can to inform what we do."

It's a beachhead at an event that has long been synonymous with its title sponsor, YouTube. And although **Facebook** has attended several VidCons in the past, this is the first year that the social network has risen to the forefront of any conversation about the future of digital **video**.

"By virtue of its scale, anything **Facebook** does is potentially transformative," said Paul Verna, a senior analyst at digital media research firm EMarketer. "They're extremely determined to become a major player in **video** and they're not a company that shies away from its goals. They're a force to be reckoned with."

It's not just VidCon where **Facebook** is planting its flag. The company is also attending E3 in Los Angeles this week. A booth inside E3 and an exhibit across the street at the LA Live plaza show that **Facebook** isn't conceding to Twitch, an Amazon-owned company and increasingly a verb synonymous with sharing **videos** about **video** games. Since hiring new executives last fall to work with the **video** game industry, **Facebook** has introduced tools for **video** game players to easily post about what they're playing -- and export **video** of in-game action onto **Facebook** Live, the company's new streaming service.

Cheaper mobile data and beefier smartphones have led to an explosion in digital **video** consumption in recent years. Advertisers are expected to spend \$9.8 billion on digital **video** this year, nearly doubling the amount they spent just two years ago, according to EMarketer.

To seize on the opportunity, **Facebook** has bolstered its server farms to handle the surge in **video** data. It's paying celebrities and publishers to use **Facebook** Live, and it's tweaked its algorithms to favour **video** on users' news feeds. Gavin McGarry, co-founder of social media agency Jumpwire Media, said a **Facebook** post with text of about eight words will show up on only 12 percent of followers' news feeds. However, that rate shoots up to 45 percent if the post includes a **video** and 50 percent if it's for **Facebook** Live, according to his company's test (the results were only for **Facebook** pages often used by businesses, not personal profiles).

"Last year, people weren't talking about **Facebook video** a lot," said McGarry, who's leading a workshop at VidCon where attendees can learn how to use **Facebook's** algorithm to their benefit. "It's so funny how in one year so much can change. If you don't have a **Facebook** strategy, then you don't have a **video** strategy."

That reliance on algorithms to surface **videos** is something of a demarcation point for **Facebook** and YouTube -- and one of the chief reasons why many believe the two platforms are different enough to not tear each other apart, at least anytime soon.

YouTube largely relies on its search engine to connect users to **videos**. It's much more of a repository of clips, shows and movies than a driver of the viral **video** du jour. **Facebook** relies on users sharing **videos** for distribution -- meaning clips can generate explosive viewership one day and then disappear the next.

YouTube has one distinct advantage at the moment: It shares the advertising revenue its creators generate online. **Facebook** is still experimenting with monetisation, partnering with a few publishers to share ad revenue and allowing some verified users to post sponsored **videos**.

"YouTube, unlike any other social media platform, started sharing revenue very early on," said Hank Green, who founded VidCon in 2010 with his brother John Green, an author and fellow vlogger. "They started sending me checks, which meant I could (make **videos**) full time and spend money on it and invest in it. That's been huge for the industry of content creation."

Green was also at the forefront of a controversy last year over freebooting, which is when people rip **videos** off YouTube and upload them onto **Facebook**. That cost YouTubers millions of views, the metric that determines ad revenue.

Green accused **Facebook** of cheating, lying and stealing in a post on Medium last August, which did nothing to engender goodwill within the YouTube creator community toward **Facebook**. The social network, led by Mark Zuckerberg, countered by introducing a service called Rights Manager in April to identify and stem

(Syndicate.info).

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