

**YouTube popularity and educational potential**

YouTube is a mainstay in online social networks. Created in 2005, now owned by Google, YouTube is the third most visited Web site on the internet behind Google and Facebook<sup>(18)</sup>. YouTube is a video-sharing website on which users can upload, share, and view videos. It provides an easy to use interface and the largest collection of a wide range of user-generated video content including videos with educational value. Each month, there are more than 1 billion unique users who visit YouTube and over 4 billion hours watched. Every minute, 72 hours of video are uploaded to YouTube with 70% of YouTube traffic coming from outside the United States. With the boom in the usage of intelligent hand held devices in the past couple of years, users, including medical professionals and students have instantaneous access to the growing collection of video content; thus, traffic from mobile devices tripled in 2011. Today, 25% of global YouTube views come from mobile devices<sup>(19)</sup>.

In the Arab world, according to a survey published in June 2012, YouTube playbacks doubled in one year putting the region the number two spot in the world behind the United States. Saudi Arabia has scored the highest number of YouTube views in the world per Internet user. In the Arab region, Saudi Arabia is followed by Egypt, Morocco and United Arab Emirates. Whereas no statistics were provided on YouTube for Iraq, its Facebook and Twitter statistics are not among the leading in the region<sup>(20)</sup>.

Technologies that were designed for purposes other than education, such as YouTube, are now frequently used in education. The educational value of YouTube has been exemplified by the establishment in 2009 of YouTube EDU, which became a home to high quality educational content from around the world. It aims to provide a global platform where anyone, anywhere can learn or teach. In the higher education category, channels from top educational institutions, including colleges and universities around the world have already

subscribed. Several video categories are broadcasted including medical videos<sup>(21)</sup>.

The use of YouTube in education is a present day topic. Little research exists in the literature about the recent use of YouTube in educating medical students and health professionals<sup>(22-28)</sup>. Considering its popularity and ease of access, the author considered YouTube an important platform for anatomy education. For that purpose, Human Anatomy Education channel was established on YouTube in early 2011<sup>(29)</sup>. A survey in May 2012 on second year MBBS students at the University of Sharjah showed that among ten other social networks, YouTube channel ownership (52%) is the second after Facebook account ownership (86%) (unpublished observations). However the percentage of YouTube channel owners is almost double the percentage of an earlier survey in May 2011 (29%). In the latter survey, 98% of students indicated that they use YouTube for acquiring medical knowledge although with different frequencies<sup>(23)</sup>.

**Aims**

This article aims to provide hints on effective usage of YouTube in medical education by evaluating an already existing video in order to recommend it to your students and by highlighting how to create and optimize your educational videos.

**How to evaluate an educational YouTube video?**

Given the relative easiness of producing and uploading videos on YouTube and its free content, it has become a pool of a huge quantity of educational videos in different specialties uploaded by students and teachers. However, the quality of such videos is not scrutinized. In addition the unregulated nature of the information contained within user generated wiki sites is potentially dangerous to those seeking online information; YouTube is not an exception in this respect. This mixture of variable content quality videos creates a burden on