

Filo.News expands digital video capabilities, experiments with new formats, and sees huge audience growth

Filo.News is an Argentinian digital-first media group that was founded in 2016 and covers news, politics, sports, economy, science, and more.

OPPORTUNITY

As one of only a few digital news publishers in Argentina, Filo.News wanted to expand its video production capabilities to reach a wider audience. It saw an opportunity to grow the team, gain insights into digital video best practices, and experiment with new formats.

1000%+

Increase in subscribers (from 4k to 300k+)

1000%+

Increase in watch time

APPROACH

Filo.News acquired new equipment, hired and trained staff in digital video best practices, and then experimented with a number of new formats to uncover what would resonate best with its audience.

Defining new workflows: As a first step, Filo.News defined video production workflows for all the different formats it wanted to experiment with. This helped determine the new equipment and staff it needed.

Building the team: Next, Filo.News consolidated the digital video team, hired staff, and invested in equipment for the creators and the studio space (e.g., lights, cameras, microphones, etc.). Over the course of the project, it provided ongoing training to staff in digital video best practices (e.g., speaking direct to camera, innovative storytelling).

Experimenting with formats: The team wanted to find new ways of telling stories that weren't being used in the current news ecosystem, so they invested heavily in *how* to tell the story, not just *what* to tell. Initially, they worked to their strengths — for example, the team had a strong advertising background, so they started off by creating short, fun pieces. But they soon evolved their processes to include new formats, such as investigative documentaries and in-depth news videos. They also collaborated with established YouTubers to help reach a broader audience. These new formats required a much more involved creation process than previous videos, including in-depth topic research, writing scripts, sourcing experts to interview, etc.

Testing and learning: Filo.News reviewed metrics on a regular basis to see how content was performing, and the team would make changes as needed. For example, by looking at click-through rate they could see what kinds of thumbnails and titles performed best. By checking watch time and other measures of engagement they could optimize video editing, structure, or length.

Optimizing workflows and processes: The team focuses on continuous optimization, both for video formats and workflows. For example, they centralized editing onto a single server, so everybody could see the status of projects and ascertain what was needed from each person at a given time. They will continue creating formats that work for their audiences, and discard ones that don't.

RESULTS

Filo.News established efficient digital-first video production processes and experimented with different formats. It now publishes videos on a daily (instead of a weekly) basis, which has led to significant audience growth.

- **Experimented** with ~15 new digital video formats.
- **1K+% increase** in subscribers (from 4K to over 300K).
- **1K+% increase** in watch time.
- **300+% increase** in video views.

LEARNINGS

Consider different channels for different audiences:

Segmentation of channel and audience is important to help match the right content to the right people. Filo.News found that some topics didn't fit its news channel, so the team created a separate channel to help better reach the right audiences. For example, videos about food performed poorly with the news audience, but when distributed through a different channel they could better reach YouTube's food-loving audiences.

Audiences know what they want: People have specific intentions and needs when they search for videos on YouTube, so ensure that your first impression counts. The title, description, and thumbnail act as a promise to the audience of what they're going to get when they click through — that's why these aspects are essential parts of the content and shouldn't be just an afterthought. Make sure you're specific and clear, but don't be 'clickbaity' because you want people to stay and watch your video, rather than just clicking on the thumbnail then leaving.

Long-form engages audiences: Filo.News found that longer videos resonated best with audiences, with the sweet spot being eight to 10 minutes. This allows creators to deep-dive into topics and provide audiences with valuable content they can learn from.

No single metric encapsulates success or failure: Different formats and types of videos can achieve different goals. Thus, a comprehensive measurement approach is required to appropriately compare videos of different types, lengths, cost, and production value.