

YouTube is changing the rules

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For nearly two years, we have produced a video every single day. That has taken its toll, so we are taking a short break next week. There will be fewer videos over the next 10 days. Not none at all, but fewer.

But there is a bigger issue.

YouTube is changing how it treats educational content. The algorithm is now prioritising novelty over repetition — and that matters, because repetition is how people learn.

In this video, I explain:

- * Why our views are falling
- * What YouTube is changing
- * Why this matters for education
- * What we are going to do about it

This is a major issue for us, with significant consequences for how we promote the ideas that matter to the Funding the Future team. We have realised we have to change how we produce video or face the prospect of reaching few people.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DZjNbOwlkno?si=6eBvIRZuE34KpP0Y>

This is the audio version:

https://www.podbean.com/player-v2/?i=tk6tw-1a735ea-pb&from=pb6admin&share=1&download=1&rtl=0&fonts=Arial&skin=f6f6f6&font-color=auto&logo_link=episode_page

&btn-skin=c73a3a

This is the transcript:

For the last two years, the team here has produced at least one video every single day. Many days we produced two, a long and a short. That pace has been intense. We've worked really hard, and we're pleased with the results. We've now got 345,000 or so subscribers. We've had over 30 million views in a year, and to date, something like 45 million views. That's a lot, but for the next week, output here is going to fall slightly, and there's a good reason for that.

The team is tired after sustained daily production. Nearly two years without a pause is, let's be honest, a lot of work. The team are taking a short break as a result, and we will be posting less over the next week.

We do think it's important to take a step back at this moment and think about what we're doing, and there's a good reason for that.

YouTube itself is changing how it's promoting our videos at present. It's announced that it's changing the way in which educational channels' videos are being treated. We are treated as an educational channel for these purposes, and we are seeing the consequences. The algorithm is getting harder for us, and we are not alone. We're hearing this feedback all over the place. We are getting fewer views. Last year, we had 30 million views on the channel. This year, if we are lucky, we'll get 20 million views. We don't think that's because the quality of our videos has fallen. We don't think it's because the materials are worse.

The reality is that the rules of YouTube's distribution have changed, and many educational channels are reporting the same trend.

What we know and what most of those channels know is that repetition is essential in education. People learn by hearing an idea more than once. That's why we will talk about some ideas more than once in the videos that we make. It's because people need the opportunity to hear one thing in more than one way to really learn it. That's how deep understanding is created. Most people in education will recognise that.

But YouTube has said it does not like that repetition. The algorithm now wants novelty, including in the education field. If a video discusses ideas already explained elsewhere, YouTube is now saying it's less likely to promote it, but education often builds on existing ideas. Of course it does. That's the nature of education. It's explaining what has already been discovered to people who don't already know it. That's what teaching does. What we now have to do, and this is the way we've got to respond to what YouTube is doing, is find new ways to explore how to do that.

Now this channel exists to explain political economy, to challenge orthodox economic thinking and to promote the politics of care and politics for people. To make economic ideas accessible, we need to adapt without losing that mission that's core to us.

So, in the next week, as we take a bit of time off, we're also going to be thinking about how this channel currently works.

We're going to be rethinking the prompts I use when recording to see if we can add some new ways of making video.

We are going to reconsider our presentation styles, new styles of thumbnails, new styles and ways of building in overlays, and new ways in which visual elements can play a larger role. All of this is stuff that we are going to be looking at because we want to aim for better reach without losing substance.

Meanwhile, while Thomas and I are focusing on that, James, who's the third member of the team, is taking on more of the wider activity; planning for our next live event is underway. We expect it will be in Leeds. This will be a bit different from the last one because feedback has been provided, and we will therefore be looking more at things like what we can do rather than what the theory behind action is, but it will be another opportunity to meet in person and discuss these ideas together.

So we are thinking more broadly about what we can do, but please, forgive us if we produce slightly fewer videos in the next week. And please use the poll that's linked below this video to give us some feedback on what we should be doing.

Please tell us what you like about the channel at present. That will help us. We will look at the results. Your feedback will shape what comes next.

We really do want to hear from you at this moment:

Are you happy with the videos we're producing?

Do you feel that some of our videos are too similar?

Should we use more graphics and real examples?

Is repetition valuable in education? If it isn't, what changes would you like to see?

These are the questions we'd like you to look at. Some of them are reflected in the poll down below, but please comment as well; your feedback genuinely helps us improve.

Please subscribe if you value the channel. Please like this video. Please talk about what we've got to say, and thank you for being part of this community. It's been fun creating the videos that we've done to date. Let's be honest, this thing is not just about work. I do this because I really believe in what I'm up to here. But knowing what you think and

how we should change to manage the constraints that YouTube is now putting upon us would be useful. So if you have any comments, please do let us know. I really will appreciate them. Thanks a lot.

Poll

[poll id="348"]