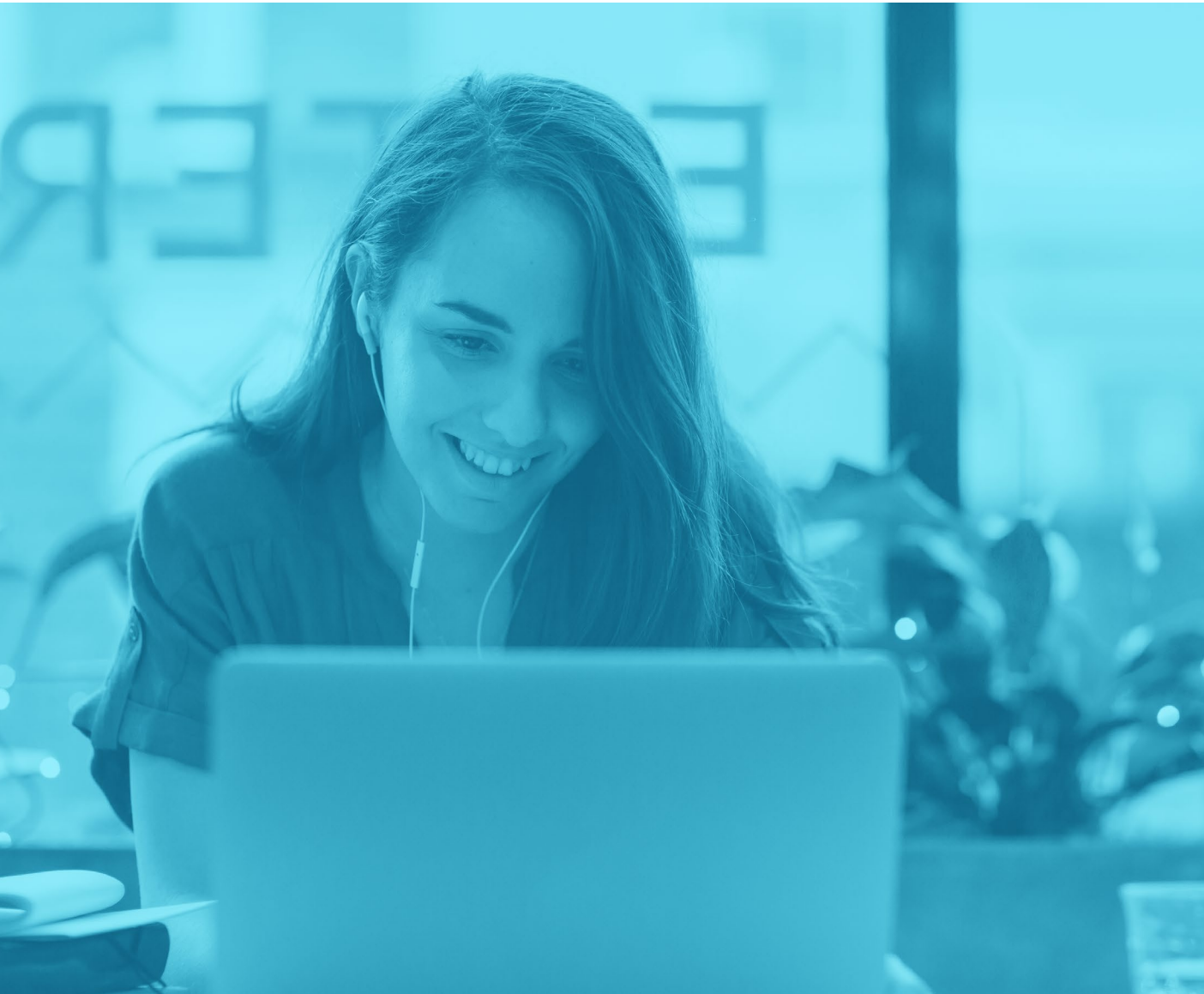# The Netflix Generation

How to engage today's students using online video

MEDIACORE

Say hello to the Netflix Generation

Online video is taking the world by storm, and today's students are the biggest consumers of online video content – they're the 'Netflix Generation'. These students have grown up in a world where video is available instantly, on-demand, and on any device.

In this eBook we outline how video is changing the internet and why educational institutions need to take note, share a few simple strategies for leveraging online video for learning, and give an overview of the technology that's making this all possible.

Video is eating the internet

Video now accounts for 43% of all online traffic – and Cisco predicts that by 2016, this number will rise to over 86% (source).

Online video has become such an important part of the web that it's even getting political – with net neutrality, and its impact on the delivery of online video, being hotly debated by the public and the FCC throughout 2014. Every day, 82 million Americans watch 1.2 billion videos online (source), and this growth shows no sign of slowing.
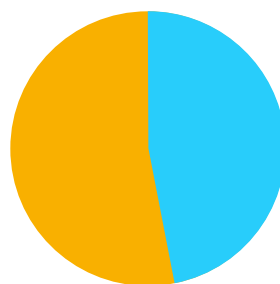
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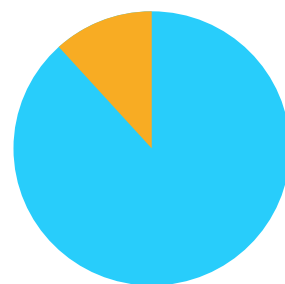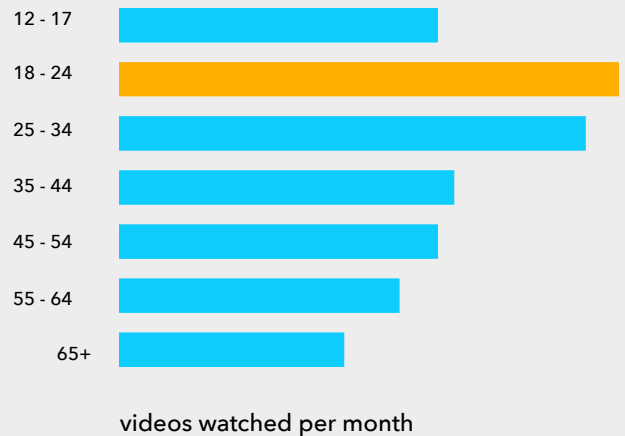
2016

● Video
● Everything else

## Young adults are the most avid consumers of online video

College–age students in the 18 - 24 age bracket are the biggest consumers of online video – watching an average of 398 online videos per month (source).

Age	
12 - 17	
18 - 24	
25 - 34	
35 - 44	
45 - 54	
55 - 64	
65+	

videos watched per month

They're increasingly mobile

Accessing video content on mobile devices is now vital to today's students, an increasingly mobile generation.

Mobile and tablet video share is growing by 133% year-over-year (source), and today's younger users are shunning television in favor of online video content, which can be accessed on–demand on any device.
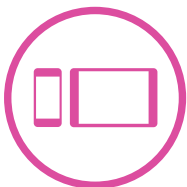
They consume content across multiple screens

They're not just watching content on one screen, they're increasingly consuming content across multiple screens (source), switching between – and even combining – mobile, tablet, desktop and other platforms.

The days of the family television set are long gone, and today's viewing habits are becoming more complex and multi-platform.

They're creating their own content, too

Today's students aren't just consuming content – they're also creating it. 100 hours of new video is uploaded to YouTube every minute (source), much of it by teen and university-aged students.

With today's digital tools allowing such easy, instant creation of digital content, sharing is second nature to today's young people – which is why they're doing more of it than ever.

Why you need to take note

With online video making such an impact across the world, forward–thinking colleges and universities are looking to explore the rich educational possibilities video can offer.
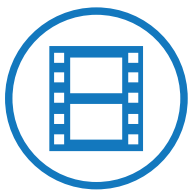
Video resonates with students

As a medium, video resonates with students like no other — and young adults are the biggest consumers of online video.

This resonance carries through to learning materials, too; online video, when incorporated into online and blended approaches to learning, can have a powerful impact on students' engagement (source).

Video puts students in control of their learning

Every student is different: They learn in different ways and at different paces. We now know that the 'one size fits all' approach of the traditional lecture isn't the best way to support their learning.

Online video, on the other hand, gives them the same control over their learning that they have over their entertainment content: they can watch, rewind and rewatch as many times as they need to, and revisit content at any point in the future when they need a refresher.

Video takes advantage of the devices in students' hands

Traditional educational resources such as PowerPoint files and Word documents don't translate very well to the devices students are using for their learning today, and they certainly don't take advantage of the power and portability of modern smartphones and tablets.

But video does: the growth of online video has gone hand-in-hand with the growth of smartphones and tablets (there's a reason your iPhone's screen is the same 16:9 ratio as most video content!). Video leverages mobile devices for learning in a powerful and impactful way.

Video is a powerful medium for learning

Video can capture the essence of a great professor or instructor, which is why we've seen tremendous growth in online video learning resources like the Khan Academy over the past few years.

Video is especially powerful in subjects with practical elements, such as medicine, veterinary science, drama, physical education and music. With video, medical procedures and student performances can be captured and safely shared, in full HD – allowing students to learn, and access material any time, in a highly visual and engaging way.

Video lets students take their learning anywhere

Online video is highly portable. In conjunction with new handheld technologies and networks such as 4G/LTE, students can access HD quality video–based learning content at any time and place – allowing them to take their learning with them wherever they go.

Colleges and universities are increasingly incorporating learning experiences outside of the traditional lecture setting – such as industry placements. With mobile video, students can access their learning materials on-demand during these placements, enhancing and enriching the learning experience.

5 Strategies for engaging the Netflix Generation

Incorporating video into the learning experience doesn't have to be complicated or daunting.

Based on our experience working with with leading universities and colleges across the world, here are five simple strategies that institutions seeking to engage the Netflix Generation can adopt.

Build engaging video into online and blended courses

1

Incorporating well–produced video content into an online course is a great way of increasing student engagement, and helps offer an enhanced learning experience that beats text-only content hands down.

Video can bring an LMS course to life, and with tools that allow video to be safely embedded into LMS courses it's easier than ever to offer mobile-friendly video through your LMS.

Capture sessions and share them immediately

2

Another defining feature of the 'Netflix generation' is their lack of patience; instead of waiting for shows to air each week, they take advantage of the instant and immediate access to content that the internet provides. They expect the same of university–provided content.

Many universities are investing in lecture capture systems which make lecture sessions available immediately to students, allowing them to re-watch and re-visit lesson content at their own pace shortly after the original presentation. There are a variety of ways of doing this – from dedicated capture appliances, to simple tablet and mobile-based applications like MediaCore Capture which allow content to be captured and shared immediately from mobile devices.

Make it easy for instructors to create and share video

3

Video may be a highly effective and engaging learning tool, but if it's difficult for instructors to actually use it regularly and incorporate into their teaching then its potential impact on learning will be severely limited.

So, it's crucial that institutions ensure that faculty are well supported, well trained, and have access to tools which make video learning resources easy to create, share, and incorporate into their courses.

Optimize content for playback

It's crucial that video learning content is available to students across any device, and in a way that allows them to browse, search, watch and engage with it in a fluid and intuitive way.

Content should be converted to ensure that it works across all devices (we cover the technical side of this in the following section), and it's also important to ensure that content is appropriately tagged and has relevant metadata, allowing students to quickly find the media that's relevant to their learning.

Thinking about length is important, too. In many circumstances, 'bite-size' video content (1 – 3minutes in length) that students can view informally on their mobile device is the most effective way of sharing content.

There's some interesting data on how video length affects engagement.

## Empower students to become content creators

Encouraging students to create and share their own video content is a powerful way to demonstrate their learning. Many universities have already realised this and are already allowing students to create content as part of their course work.

Video assignments – which ask students to submit a video recording, rather than a traditional text-based assignment – are one way of achieving this within a traditional academic context. This allows instructors to grade student video submissions within the LMS in the standard way.

Many institutions are encouraging students to create and share their own content in a more open-ended way, too – via a private university YouTube-like environment. Today's students have grown up with a sharing mindset, and allowing them to demonstrate their learning in a creative way, whilst adding value for their peers by sharing it, is a powerful way of engaging them.
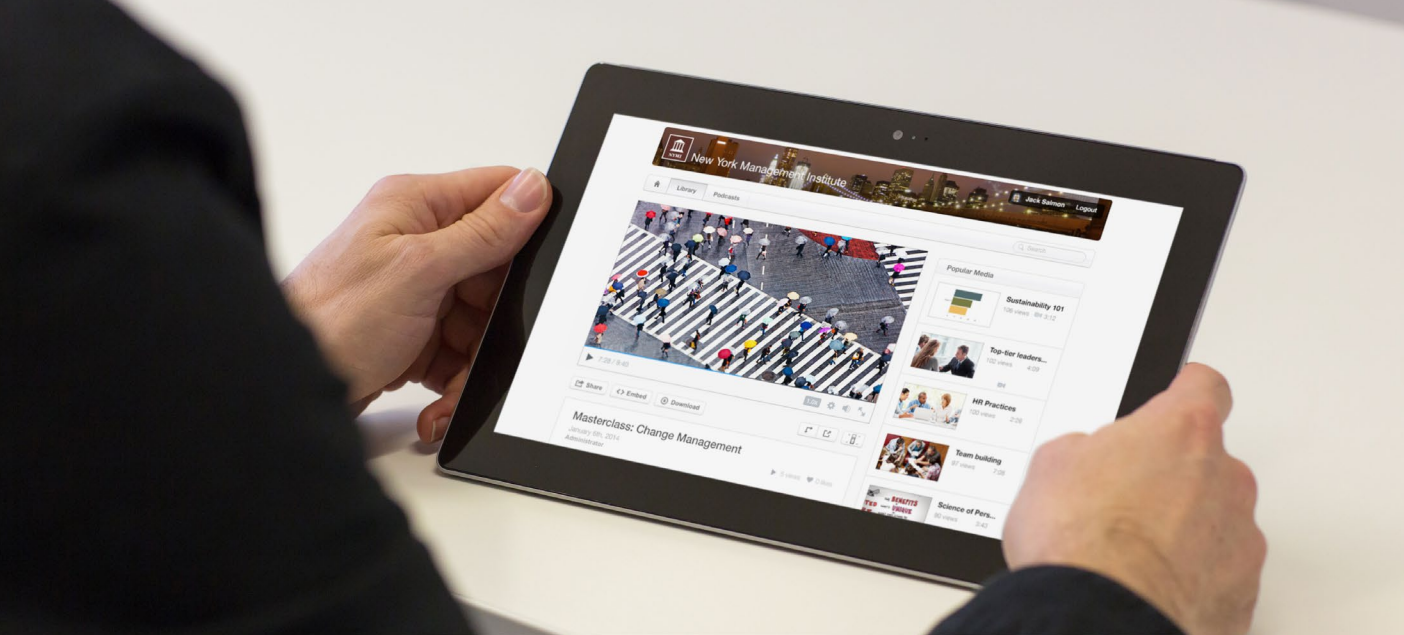
What technology do you need to do this?

One of the reasons for the success of Netflix is the millions of dollars the company has invested in creating a global video delivery infrastructure that guarantees a great playback experience across all devices, browsers and connections – alongside measures to ensure the security of content.

Until now, this kind of infrastructure has been out of the reach of many educational institutions, due to its complexity and cost. But, with cloud video delivery becoming increasingly intuitive and affordable, cutting-edge video technologies are now firmly within the grasp of universities and instructors.

In this section, we'll take a quick look at the key technologies that are making this possible:

Cloud video encoding

Video encoding is the process of converting video from its original format (of which there are hundreds) into a format that's suitable for online delivery to any device. It's a tricky business, with thousands of variables, and requires lots of processing horsepower – and in the past it's been one of the major barriers to universities sharing video online.

Modern cloud encoding handles all of this automatically – allowing academics to upload video in any format, safe in the knowledge that it will be converted to 'just work' for students, on any device.

Smart video playback

It's essential that when a student clicks play, the video 'just works' – no matter which browser or device they're using. The Netflix Generation expect instant, high-quality playback.

The latest HTML5 playback technology is great – but not all browsers (such as older versions of Internet Explorer) can support it, so a 'fallback' for older browsers is essential. A modern, smart video player provides all of this – ensuring super-fast performance on all browsers, HD/SD selection, and playback speed controls.

Content delivery networks

An online/distance learning student may be anywhere in the world – and it's important that they get a great streaming experience whichever country they're in.

Content Delivery Networks work by mirroring video content on thousands of servers across the world. When the student hits 'play', their video is delivered from a server that's geographically close to their location, ensuring a great playback experience. The Akamai CDN, (the same network that Facebook uses) is widely considered to be the best-of-breed CDN.

Security and authentication

It's especially important for institutional video content that robust authentication and access management is in place, to ensure the security and privacy of content.

Public video sharing sites such as YouTube and Vimeo lack the authentication features that are vital to universities, which is why many institutions are choosing to adopt enterprise-grade, private video platforms that integrate directly with their existing authentication mechanisms, along with plugins that allow video to be seamlessly incorporated into LMS courses.

Shibboleth, Active Directory and LTI are all popular ways of securing video content to the educational community – and access control and licensing features, such as the ability to restrict video content for playback by specific IP address ranges, offer further control over the security of content.

Thanks for reading!

We hope this guide can help you develop a better strategy to engage with your students using online video.

If you enjoyed the guide, please consider sharing it. And, if you'd like to learn more about how you can improve your online video strategy, get in touch – we'd love to help!

About the author

James Cross is an Apple Distinguished Educator, and an expert in the use of online media for learning.

As MediaCore's Director of Education, James works with institutions around the world to help them build powerful learning experiences with online video.

James is a published author on the topic of digital media-based learning, and is invited to speak regularly on the subject – including SXSWedu 2013 + 2014.

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About MediaCore

Video is transforming education, and MediaCore helps hundreds of educational institutions around the world embrace it.

The MediaCore Video Platform puts powerful video learning and sharing tools into the hands of every student and professor – empowering them to easily capture, manage and share video privately and securely across all platforms and mobile devices.

Learn more at MediaCore.com.