# YouTube at 20: a look back at the videos that changed the world



This year marks two decades since the inaugural video was uploaded to YouTube, an event that has since transformed the platform from a simple personal video-sharing website into a dynamic global hub for creativity, entertainment, and culture. Over the years, YouTube has evolved to attract an enormous and diverse audience, becoming a fertile ground for talented performers, spawning new genres of entertainment, and also experiencing significant controversies.

The online publication Tech Radar commemorates this milestone by revisiting some of the most memorable videos and moments in YouTube history, highlighting the platform's broad cultural impact through a curated list contributed by its editorial team.

One of the earliest iconic clips is “Yee,” a nine-second abstract video derived from the Italian dubbing of an old cartoon. Its enigmatic nature has helped it endure for over a decade, amassing close to 100 million views. This video heads the “Important videos” playlist, which serves as a time capsule of early YouTube content.

Another early sensation was “Evolution of Dance” by comedian Judson Laipply, which captured widespread attention across generations with its nostalgic and entertaining dance medley. Garnering over 314 million views, Laipply is often regarded as YouTube's first celebrity.

Music videos also played a pivotal role in shaping YouTube culture. Weezer’s “Pork and Beans” notably featured numerous well-known YouTube personalities of the time, blending internet fame with mainstream music success and earning a Grammy Award in 2009. Similarly, OK Go’s “Here it Goes Again” music video, a creative one-take treadmill dance, won a Grammy in 2007 and remains emblematic of the platform’s innovative spirit.

The viral potential of YouTube is evident in unexpected corners, such as Dr. Jean’s “Banana Dance,” a children’s educational song that found popularity among teens and young adults due to its quirky nature. Likewise, “Geraldine Loves Star Wars” delights viewers through its humorous twist involving a dog and a veterinary setting.

The comedy genre has been well represented by creators like HowToBasic, which subverted conventional instructional content with absurd and chaotic videos, and RocketJump, one of the first production studios on YouTube recognised for short-form series such as “Video Game High School”.

Global hits have also set viewing records. Psy’s “Gangnam Style” was the first video to surpass one billion views in 2012, upsetting previous records and engaging world leaders in its dance craze. Luis Fonsi’s “Despacito” still holds the record for the most-viewed music video on the site with 8.7 billion views, further highlighting YouTube’s role in spreading musical phenomena internationally.

Beyond music and comedy, educational content thrives on the platform, illustrated by the popular “Tiny Desk Concerts” series and the VSauce channel, founded by Michael Stevens, which explores intriguing scientific and philosophical questions for millions of viewers.

The list also pays homage to other culturally significant contributions such as “Double Rainbow,” a viral nature reaction video, “Tom Scott," known for a decade of educational uploads, and the enduring “asdfmovie” series by Thomas Ridgewell that encapsulated the quirky humour of early 2010s internet culture.

The platform has also been a launchpad for original animation like “Eddsworld,” a beloved British series continuing after its creator’s death, and “Potter Puppet Pals,” which provided a surreal parody of the Harry Potter franchise.

Further illustrating YouTube’s diverse appeal is the 2016 XXL Cypher, a landmark event in the rap genre featuring prominent artists who embodied the then-burgeoning SoundCloud rap scene, and the “Annoying Orange,” which successfully transitioned from online shorts to a wider media franchise.

YouTube’s in-house production efforts have also experienced mixed receptions. The “YouTube Rewind” series, annual compilations of platform highlights, became increasingly controversial, culminating in the widely criticised 2018 edition which was labelled by many as out of touch with the community and became the most disliked video on the site.

In reflecting on this 20-year journey, Tech Radar highlights the broad and sometimes unexpected ways in which YouTube has influenced entertainment, education, and culture worldwide. From viral quirks to groundbreaking creativity, the platform continues to be a significant venue where digital creativity thrives and evolves.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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