

Joining the YouTube Community—And Creating Your Own Channel

YouTube is a video sharing community. The community aspects of the site let you share your videos with others, identify others who share your particular interests, and even communicate with other users. When you join the YouTube community, you'll get a lot more out of the site—and find more fun videos to watch!

Working with Channels

The most common way to participate in the YouTube community is by utilizing YouTube's *channels*. On YouTube, a channel is just a fancy name for a user's profile. Other users can access your channel/profile to find out what videos you've uploaded and which videos are your favorites; you can also subscribe to a user's profile to be notified when that user uploads new videos to the YouTube site.

Viewing a Channel Profile

You access a user's channel by clicking on that user's name wherever it appears on the YouTube site. This takes you to the user's channel/profile page, like the one shown in Figure 12.1. Although each profile page is unique, all pages contain the same major elements:

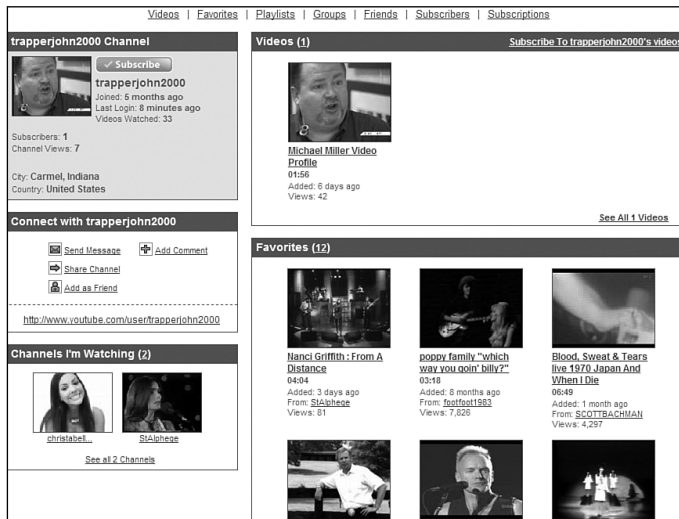


Figure 12.1

A typical YouTube channel profile page.

- Links to the user's favorite videos, playlists, groups, friends, and the like
- Information about the user, including a link to subscribe to this channel
- Videos uploaded by this user
- Links to connect to the user, via email, comments, and so on
- The user's favorite videos
- Channels the user is watching
- Subscribers to the user's channel
- Comments on this user's channel

In other words, you access a user's channel page to learn more about that user—and to connect with that person.

Subscribing to a Channel

If you like what you see on a user's channel/profile page, you can *subscribe* to that person's channel. When you subscribe to a channel, you are automatically notified (via email) when the user uploads new videos.

To subscribe to a user's channel, go that person's channel/profile page and click the Subscribe button. To unsubscribe to a channel, return to that user's channel/profile page and click the Un-Subscribe button. To view videos from your currently subscribed-to channels, go to YouTube's home page and click the Subscriptions link in the My box.

Tip 4U

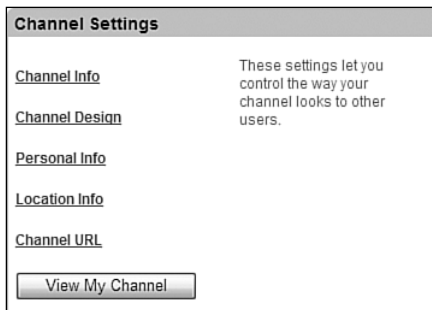
YouTube thrives on social networking—and your channel and videos will get more viewers if you fully participate in the YouTube community. That means subscribing to a lot of channels and leaving comments with those videos and users you identify with. What goes around comes around; the more comments you leave, the more people will see your name and channel, and the more views your videos will receive.

Personalizing Your YouTube Channel

Because a YouTube channel page is really a user profile page, you'll want to create your own channel page and customize it to reflect your personality. It's easy to do.

As to creating your channel page, there's nothing to do; YouTube creates a profile page for you when you subscribe to the site. The default channel page is a little bland, however—which is why you want to customize it.

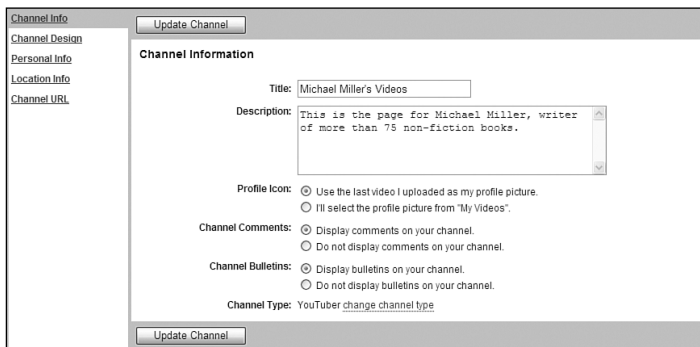
You personalize your channel page from your My Account page. Just click the My Account link at the top of any YouTube page, and when the My Account page appears, scroll to the Channel Settings section, shown in Figure 12.2.

**Figure 12.2**

Getting ready to personalize your channel profile page.

From here you can edit the following channel elements:

- **Channel Info**—As shown in Figure 12.3, you can enter a new title and description for your channel page. You can also opt to select a new video to use for your profile picture (by default, your last-uploaded video serves this function), as well as configure other channel display options.
- **Channel Design**—As shown in Figure 12.4, this is where you change the overall look and feel of your channel page. You can select a new color scheme for your page; opt to show or hide various page elements; and choose custom colors for selected page elements, as well as a background image for your page.

**Figure 12.3**

Personalizing your channel info.

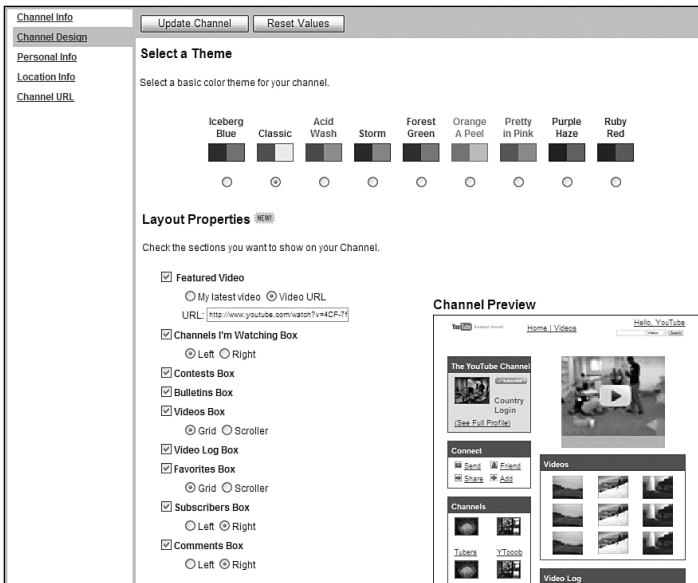


Figure 12.4
Personalizing the design of your channel page.

- **Personal Info**—As shown in Figure 12.5, this page lets you enter personal information to be displayed on your channel page, such as your name, gender, description of yourself, link to an outside website, occupation, interests, and so on.
- **Location Info**—As shown in Figure 12.6, this is where you enter your hometown, current city, Zip code, and country.
- **Channel URL**—As shown in Figure 12.7, this page displays the URL for your channel page.

As you make changes to any page element, make sure you click the Update Channel button—or you'll lose the changes you made.

Tip 4U To hide your age on your channel/profile page, go to your My Account page, scroll to the Channel Settings section, click the Personal Info link, and then select the Do Not Display Your Age on Your Public Profile option. Click the Update Channel button when finished.

The screenshot shows the 'Update Channel' interface. On the left is a sidebar with links: Channel Info, Channel Design, Personal Info (highlighted), Location Info, and Channel URL. The main area is titled 'Update Channel' and contains three sections: 'Personal Information', 'Professional Information', and 'Student Information'. The 'Personal Information' section includes fields for First Name, Last Name, Gender (dropdown), Relationship Status (dropdown), Display Age (radio buttons for 'Display your age' and 'Do not display your age'), an 'About Me' text area, and a Website field. The 'Professional Information' section has fields for Occupations and Companies. The 'Student Information' section has a Schools field.

Figure 12.5

Adding personal info to your channel page.

This screenshot shows the 'Update Channel' interface with the 'Location Information' section selected. The sidebar on the left is the same as in Figure 12.5. The main area shows the 'Update Channel' header and the 'Location Information' section, which contains fields for Hometown, Current City, Current Zip/Postal Code (with a note: '(11 characters, alpha-numeric)'), and Current Country (dropdown). An 'Update Channel' button is at the bottom.

Figure 12.6

Adding your location to your channel page.

This screenshot shows the 'Update Channel' interface with the 'Channel URL' section selected. The sidebar on the left is the same as in Figure 12.5. The main area shows the 'Update Channel' header and the 'Channel URL' section, which has a single text field containing the URL 'http://youtube.com/mmlillerwriter'. An 'Update Channel' button is at the bottom.

Figure 12.7

Viewing your channel URL.

Managing Your Channel's Video Blog

One cool feature that you can add to your channel page is a video blog, or *Vlog*. A Vlog is an easy way for you to create a personal video journal accessible to anyone visiting your channel.

To create a Vlog, go to the YouTube home page and click the Playlists link in the My box. When the Playlists page appears, you can choose to select an existing playlist as your Vlog, or create a new playlist to hold new Vlog entries. To use an existing playlist, select the playlist and then click the Set as Vlog button. To create a new Vlog playlist, click the Create Playlist button to create the new playlist, and make sure you check the Use This Playlist as Video Log in My Channel option.

Your Vlog now appears on your channel profile page. The individual videos in the Vlog playlist are stacked on top of each other; visitors can click a video to view it.

Working with Groups

Another form of community on YouTube is the YouTube groups feature. A group is a social forum where users interested in a given topic can share videos and conduct online discussions.


Joining an Existing Group

To find YouTube groups, click the Community tab and then click the Groups link on the left side of the page. You can now browse groups by type (Featured, Recently Added, Most Members, Most Videos, Most Discussions, or Colleges) or by Categories.

When you access a group page, like the one shown in Figure 12.8, you see links to group videos, members, and discussions. Recent videos are displayed, as are the most recent group discussions.

To join a group, simply click the Join This Group link. After you've joined a group, you can participate in group discussions, add videos to the group, and so forth.

Joining a group discussion is as easy as clicking the discussion link; this displays the discussion page, such as the one shown in Figure 12.9. You can then read comments within that discussion, or add your own comment from the Add New Comment section at the bottom of the page.




Celine Dion
[1099 Videos](#) | [595 Members](#) | [65 Discussions](#)
 Share and watch the best videos from Céline Dion.


[Join This Group](#)
[Flag as Inappropriate](#)

This YouTube Group is one of the first created, and is dedicated to one of the greatest voice in the musi (more)


Recent Videos (See all 1099 videos) Join this group to add a video




Star Système - Celine parle sur D'selles (15-02-2007) 04:16 From: CelineDionPT




Celine Dion - I Knew I Loved You Making Of Clip 00:39 From: celinechanceforum



Celine Dion recording "I knew I loved you" 01:24 From: ceddup1



CELLLLINE! 00:24 From: getachkaraoke



Céline Dion Message MAKING CLIP 00:50 From: CelineDion555

(See all 1099 videos)

Discussions (65) Join this group to post a topic

Topic	Author	Replies	Last Post
Celine Dion's MTV diary, help?	osinhos	0	N/A
I would like to invite you to join my circle of friend, check me here: http://hometown.aol.com/sevlessicalou	jessicapassion02	0	N/A
is celine dion funny in any way	ashlevidva	1	1 week ago
SINGERS, check out MydoltWorld.com. Monthly prizes to the winners and its worldwidet www.mydoltworld.com	performingstar01	0	N/A

Figure 12.8

A YouTube group page.



Celine Dion
[1099 Videos](#) | [597 Members](#) | [65 Discussions](#)
 Share and watch the best videos from Céline Dion.

[Add Videos](#)
[Invite Members](#)
[Disable Notifications](#)
[Leave This Group](#)
[Flag as Inappropriate](#)

This YouTube Group is one of the first created, and is dedicated to one of the greatest voice in the musi (more)

[ucirvine](#) (November 19, 2006)
 Celine Dion & Shania Twain are Canadians and great friends so...

[ucirvine](#) (3 months ago)
 I just wanted to share with you that Shania Twain has a fan group on Youtube too, <http://www.youtube.com/group/shaniatwain> (Reply)

[upcw](#) (3 months ago)
 I don't think so. (Reply)

Add New Comment:

Figure 12.9

Joining in a group discussion.

Joining a College Group

YouTube also has special groups for selected colleges. Click the Colleges link on the Community page to display the Colleges page, shown in Figure 12.10. From here you can select your college from the Join Your College list; then click the Join Now button. (You'll need to enter your college email address to join your college group; this keeps nonstudents from participating.)

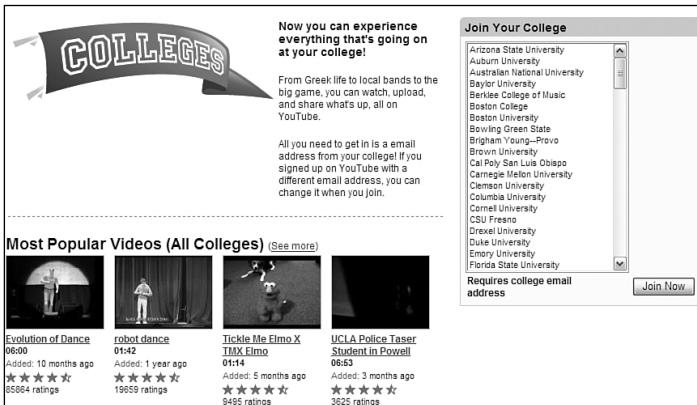
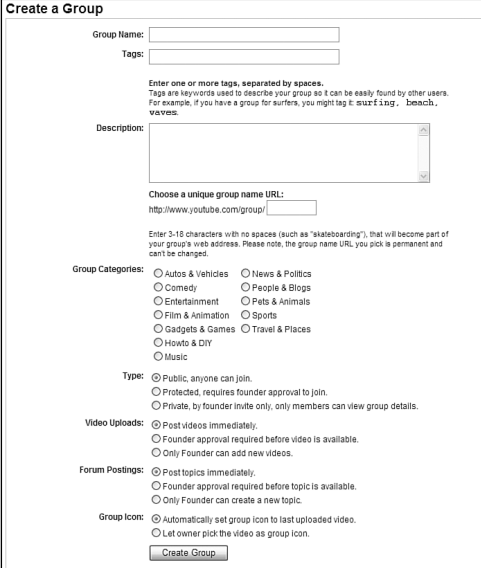


Figure 12.10
Joining a college group.

Creating a New Group

You can also create your own personal YouTube group about any topic you want. Just click the Groups link on the Community page; then click the Create a Group button. When the Create a Group page appears, as shown in Figure 12.11, enter a name and description for the group, along with identifying tags, a custom URL for the group, a category, the type of group (public or private), and how you want to handle video uploads, forum postings, and the group icon. Click the Create Group button when finished, and your group is launched into the YouTube community.



Create a Group

Group Name:

Tags:

Enter one or more tags, separated by spaces.
Tags are keywords used to describe your group so it can be easily found by other users.
For example, if you have a group for surfers, you might tag it: surfing, beach, waves.

Description:

Choose a unique group name URL:
 http://www.youtube.com/group/

Enter 3-18 characters with no spaces (such as "skateboarding"), that will become part of your group's web address. Please note, the group name URL you pick is permanent and can't be changed.

Group Categories:

<input type="radio"/> Autos & Vehicles	<input type="radio"/> News & Politics
<input type="radio"/> Comedy	<input type="radio"/> People & Blogs
<input type="radio"/> Entertainment	<input type="radio"/> Pets & Animals
<input type="radio"/> Film & Animation	<input type="radio"/> Sports
<input type="radio"/> Gadgets & Games	<input type="radio"/> Travel & Places
<input type="radio"/> Hobbies & DIY	
<input type="radio"/> Music	

Type:

- ☒ Public, anyone can join.
- ☐ Protected, requires founder approval to join.
- ☐ Private, by founder invite only, only members can view group details.

Video Uploads:

- ☒ Post videos immediately.
- ☐ Founder approval required before video is available.
- ☐ Only Founder can add new videos.

Forum Postings:

- ☒ Post topics immediately.
- ☐ Founder approval required before topic is available.
- ☐ Only Founder can create a new topic.

Group Icon:

- ☒ Automatically set group icon to last uploaded video.
- ☐ Let owner pick the video as group icon.

Figure 12.11
Creating a new YouTube Group.

To invite others to join your group, click the **Invite Members** link at the top right of the group page. This displays the page shown in Figure 12.12; you can invite members of your Friends list, or invite other members by entering their member names in the New Friends list. Click the **Send** button to send your invitations.

To add videos to your group, click the **Add Videos** link at the top right of the group page. This displays a page with links to your current favorite videos and playlists, as shown in Figure 12.13. Check any video you want to add; then click the **Add to Group** button. Alternatively, you can click the **Upload a Video** button to upload a new video and add it to your group.



Dave Brubeck Videos
 2 Videos | 1 Members | 0 Discussions
 A list devoted to the classic Dave Brubeck Quartet.

[Edit Group Details](#)
[Manage Videos](#)
[Add Videos](#)
[Invite Members](#)
[Disable Notifications](#)

Invite Friends to This Group

Friends:

MichaelMillerWriter

Add All >>
Add >
< Remove
<< Remove All

Invitees:


Invite New Friends
Enter YouTube Username or Email Addresses separated by Commas:

Your Message

Subject:trapperjohn2000 has invited you to join YouTube group brubeck
 Message: (enter no more than 500 characters)

Send Cancel

Figure 12.12
Inviting other YouTubers to join your group.



Dave Brubeck Videos
 2 Videos | 1 Members | 1 Discussions
 A list devoted to the classic Dave Brubeck Quartet.


[Edit Group Details](#)
[Manage Videos](#)
[Add Videos](#)
[Invite Members](#)
[Disable Notifications](#)

Add Videos
Select videos from your lists of videos to add to this group. Done

My Videos
My Favorites
George Bush Parodies
Grammy Performances
Jazz
Supermarionation
Upload a Video

Add to Group

Videos 1-1 of 1

☐


Michael Miller Video Profile
 01:56
 Video profile of author Michael Miller, aired on Indianapolis WISH-TV Channel 8 Daybreak morning show.

Add to Group

Videos 1-1 of 1

Done

Figure 12.13
Adding videos to your new group.

Working with Friends and Contacts

You don't have to create a group to mingle with people on YouTube. That's because YouTube lets you create lists of users with whom you can share your videos. These Friends and Family lists are kind of like the Buddy lists in AOL Instant Messenger; one click on a YouTube list lets you share your videos.

Adding a Friend to Your List

Adding an existing YouTube member to your friends list is relatively easy. Just go to that member's channel/profile page, scroll to the Connect With box, shown in Figure 12.14, and click the Add as Friend link. You'll now see the Friend Invitation page, shown in Figure 12.15; select whether to add this person as Friends or Family; then click the Send Invite button. The person will receive an email invitation to be your friend; if he accepts, he's added to your friends list.



Figure 12.14

Adding an existing YouTube member to your friends list.

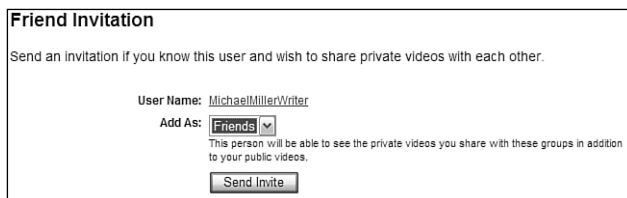


Figure 12.15

Sending the friend's invitation.

You can also add friends who aren't yet YouTube members. Just click the My Account link at the top of any YouTube page to display the My Account page; then scroll down to the Friends & Contacts section, shown in Figure 12.16, and click the Invite More Friends button. When the Invite Your Friends page appears, as shown in Figure 12.17, enter your name, the email addresses of those folks you want to invite (separate each address with a comma), and a personal invitation message. Click the Send Invite button, and your friends will receive an official email invitation. They can click the link in the email message to join YouTube and be added to your friends list.

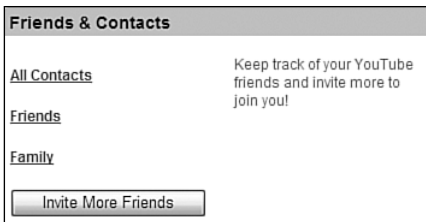


Figure 12.16
Managing friends and contacts from your My Account page.

Invite Your Friends

We'll send each person you list below an email invitation to join YouTube as your friend or family. If you want to invite an existing YouTube user, you can do this from their Profile page.

Your First Name:

Email Addresses:

(Separated by commas)

Your Message:

Hello [first name],

YouTube is a new site for sharing and hosting personal videos. I have been using YouTube to share videos with my friends and family. I would like to add you to the list of people I may share videos with.

Personal message from [first name]:

Have you heard about YouTube? I love this site.

Thanks,
[your first name]

Figure 12.17
Inviting a non-YouTuber to join your friends list.

Tip 4U

You're not limited to just two contact lists (Friends and Family). To create new lists, go to your All Contacts page, click the Create New List button, and then enter a name for the list. You can then move existing contacts to the new list by checking a contact name and selecting the new list from the Copy Contacts To list.

Sending Messages to Your Friends

When you want to send a message to someone in your friends list, go to your My Account page, scroll down to the Friends & Contacts section, and click the All Contacts link. As you can see in Figure 12.18, this lists all your contacts, no matter which list you've put them in. Click the Send Message link next to a friend's name; this displays the Compose Message page shown in Figure 12.19. Enter a subject for your message and the text of the message itself. If you want to attach a YouTube video to this message, pull down the Attach a Video list and choose a video from your favorites. Click the Send Message button to send the message on its way.

Tip 4U

You're not limited to sending messages only to existing friends and contacts. To send a message to any YouTube user, go to your inbox and click the Compose New Message button; from here you can enter any member's username for the message you compose.



Figure 12.18

Viewing all your YouTube contacts.

My Inbox

Your inbox is the central place to keep track of messages from other people on YouTube. You can view and delete messages and invites sent to you, and also send messages to others.

[General Messages](#)
[Friend Invites](#)
[Received Videos](#)
[Video Comments](#)
[Sent](#)
Compose

Compose Message

From: trapperjohn2000
 To: [MichaelMillerWriter](#)
 Subject:
 Attach a video: - Your Videos -
 Message:

Figure 12.19
 Sending a message to a friend.

Reading Messages from Other Users

Messages sent to you from other users end up in your YouTube inbox. You access the inbox from YouTube's home page; just click the Inbox link in the My box. As you can see in Figure 12.20, your inbox lists all email messages you've received, under the General Messages link. (You can view other types of messages by clicking the Friend Invites, Received Videos, Video Comments, Video Responses, or Sent links.)

My Account / General Messages [My Videos](#) - [Favorites](#) - [Playlists](#) - [Inbox](#) - [Subscriptions](#)

Your inbox is the central place to keep track of messages and videos from other people on YouTube. You can view and delete messages and invites sent to you, manage comments and video responses, and send messages to others.

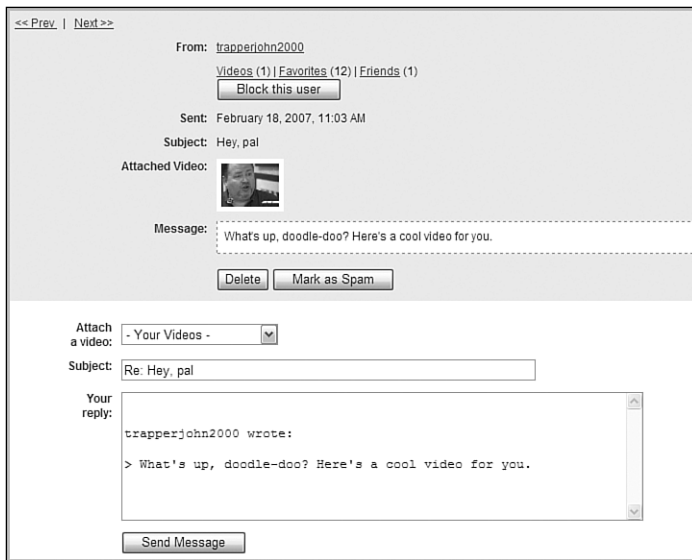
[General Messages](#)
[Friend Invites](#)
[Received Videos](#)
[Video Comments](#)
[Video Responses](#)
[Sent](#)

	From	Subject	Sent
<input type="checkbox"/>	trapperjohn2000	Hey, pal	February 18, 2007

[Check/Uncheck All](#)

Figure 12.20
 Waiting messages in your YouTube inbox.

To read a message, just click it in your inbox. The message is now displayed onscreen, as shown in Figure 12.21. You can delete the message, mark it as spam, or send a reply to the message by using the Your Reply box and the Send Message button.

**Figure 12.21**

Reading a message from another user.

Chatting with Other Users Via Streams

Another way to participate in the YouTube community is to chat with other viewers in real-time, using YouTube's new Streams feature. Streams lets you watch a video with a group of other users, and chat with those users while you're watching.

The main Streams page, shown in Figure 12.22, lists the currently active Streams. To join a Stream, simply click the Stream name. Alternatively, you can start a new Stream by clicking the Create Your Own Stream link.

When you join a Stream, you see a page like the one shown in Figure 12.23. The currently playing video is shown in the main video player window; the other users in the Stream are listed to the right of the video; chat comments are listed even farther right; and the playlist of videos in the Stream is displayed above all. Enter your chat messages in the message box on the bottom right; press the Enter button to post your message. It's a fun way to watch videos as a group!

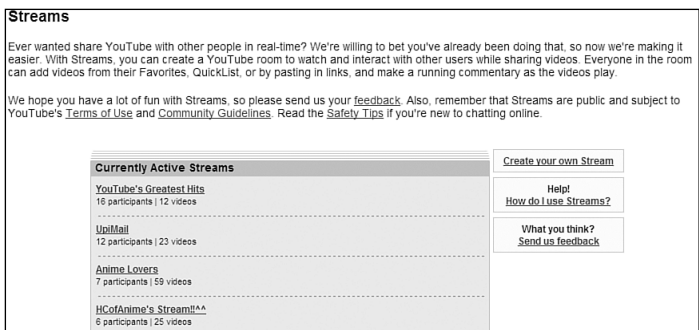


Figure 12.22
Viewing YouTube Streams.

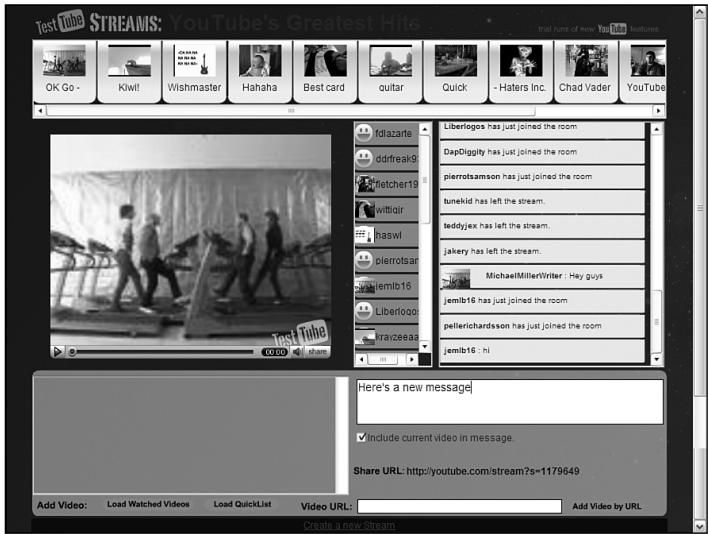


Figure 12.23
Chatting about videos in a YouTube Stream.

Info 4U As of spring 2007, Streams is currently in the public testing phase as part of YouTube's TestTube program. To check it out, go to www.youtube.com/streams_main.

Keeping in Touch Via the YouTube Blog and Forum

Want to keep up with what's going on behind the scenes at YouTube? Want to get to know some of the people who make the site work? Then check out the YouTube blog, shown in Figure 12.24. The YouTube Blog is a collection of text and video posts by members of the YouTube team. It's a great way to put faces to the services offered by the YouTube site.




Figure 12.24
YouTube's internal community—the YouTube Blog.

You access the YouTube Blog at www.youtube.com/blog, or by clicking the Blog link at the bottom of any YouTube page.

Also interesting are the Unofficial YouTube Forums (www.youtubeforums.com), shown in Figure 12.25. At the name implies, this is an unofficial site where people gather to discuss all things YouTube. It's a great place to hang out with fellow YouTubers, ask

questions of more experienced users, share links to cool videos you've seen, promote your own videos, and just generally chat about what you do or don't like about YouTube.



Sponsored by

Save YouTube Videos with > Save Tube

YouTubeForums.com (Unofficial YouTube Forum) is a place to view and discuss popular videos and pictures that you find on Google Video, YouTube, Grouper, JumpCut, etc. Join the forum, it's free and takes 10 secs.

Already at 1,284 members and growing!

User Name

Remember Me? ☐

Password

Log in

YouTube Forum

Register

FAQ

Members List

Calendar

Today's Posts

Search v

Welcome to the YouTube Forum.

If this is your first visit, be sure to check out the **FAQ** by clicking the link above. You may have to **register** before you can post: click the register link above to proceed. To start viewing messages, select the forum that you want to visit from the selection below.

Forum	Last Post	Threads	Posts
General YouTube Forum (the Original one)			
YouTubeTalk (3 Viewing) Talk about YouTube in general.	Something wrong with YouTube... by hermes2006us Today 06:16 AM	71	184
Video Editing Let's talk about video editing here!	White letters on a blue... by RuzPaday Yesterday 04:56 AM	4	29
Support Need help? It's around the corner when you click here.	AHH!!!! videos won't load!! by pppvvv02 02-18-2007 05:11 PM	159	505
Off-Topic Talk about anything else you would like!	Britney Spears - home videos by pablvvqna 02-17-2007 10:45 PM	25	74
New Members Please introduce yourself here when you join.	Trailers - new member by hermes2006us Yesterday 02:32 PM	37	56
YouTube Related Tools & Sites You know, those sites that are related to youtube?	TurboFlix - A Free YouTube... by khaleaic 02-14-2007 12:19 PM	16	43
PROMOTE Your Own Videos HERE! Show us your videos that you have submitted to YouTube, Grouper or Google.	The Coolest Story Ever Told by zuppy Yesterday 11:39 PM	132	229

Video of the Week Section - Promote yours too by posting in this section!

Figure 12.25
Chat with fellow YouTubers at the Unofficial YouTube Forums.