



Episode 8: Annotation Nation part two

<at desk> Last time, we started talking about using annotations in your videos, and I said they were a lot like these little things. You know, they're fun to use, they're small, they can go anywhere.. the problem is...they're fun, they're small, and they can go anywhere, and when they're overused, well you start losing the message of your video, and you might start losing viewers. That's definitely not good. So here we go with part two. Stick around and find out... <open segment>

Ideally the video should take center stage, and capture the viewer's attention and focus. Text pop-ups and clickable hotspots on the video can easily detract from the viewing experience, so these should be used carefully. A good starting point is to understand what viewers look for in annotations.

✔ **Viewers like annotations that...**

- supplement and enrich the video
- aren't overly invasive
- are contextually relevant and give value to viewers

✘ **Viewers don't like annotations that...**

- distract and reduce the perceived quality of the video
- take over the video
- only serve the video creator (often perceived as spam)

⊘ **Duration:** Annotations should only be displayed for the amount of time needed to read them. Showing annotations for any longer period of time could be distracting to the user and perceived as annoying. In most cases 5-7 seconds is sufficient for the viewer to read annotations.

⌘ **Size:** Try to make your annotations small so that they block as little of the video as possible. Annotations that take up all or most of the video area should be avoided.

⌘ **Color:** Vibrant fill colors such as red, yellow, blue, orange and pink are likely to be eye-catching, to distract viewers and to create a feeling of clutter. Use these types of colors only when annotations need to be the center attention. In all other cases muted colors (transparent, semi-transparent, gray, white and black) work best.

⌘ **Position:** If possible, position your annotations on the borders of the video and away from the center of the video. The image below shows the best positioning for your annotations.

⌘ The best locations to put your annotations are the top corners of the video area (see positions 1 and 3 in the image above). Annotations can also be placed on the top and side borders of the video (see positions 2, 4 and 6). The center area of the video (see position 5) is best left without annotations to avoid obscuring the video. Placing annotations at the bottom of the video (see position 7) is also not recommended as annotations here may be hidden by closed-captioning (subtitles) and ads.

- **Add value:** create annotations that add value to the viewing experience rather than detract from it: supplementary information, links, better navigation, interactivity, entertainment and so on. Your audience will appreciate this and will return for more.

<at desk> Fun tho they may be, annotations are powerful, so just remember to look at it from your viewers' point of view. If you have questions or comments, let us know, or you can download the transcript. For now...that's a wrap.

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