

# A BRIEF

— history —

## *of viral videos*

FEATURING DATA & ANALYSIS FROM

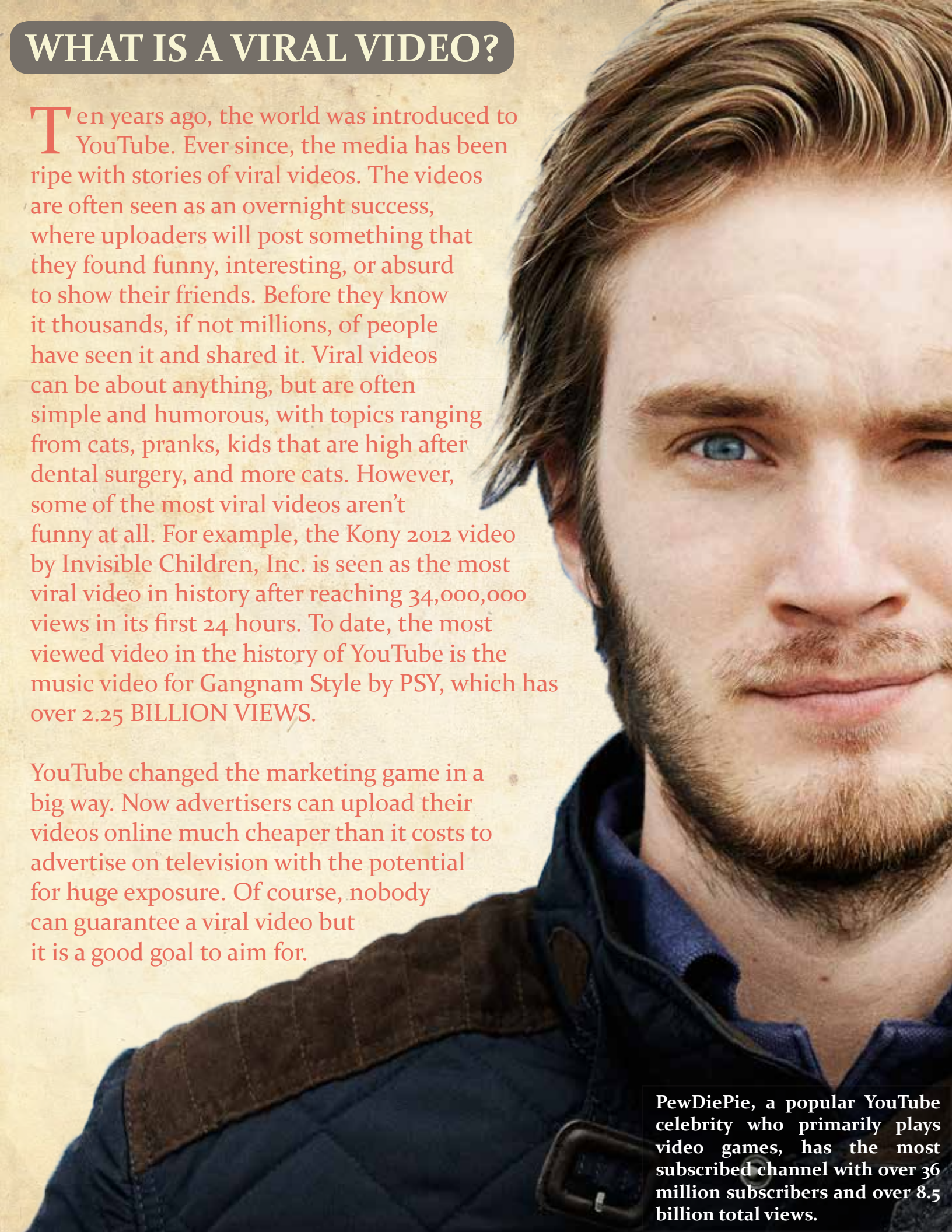
**SASKATCHEWHAT?!**



# WHAT IS A VIRAL VIDEO?

Ten years ago, the world was introduced to YouTube. Ever since, the media has been ripe with stories of viral videos. The videos are often seen as an overnight success, where uploaders will post something that they found funny, interesting, or absurd to show their friends. Before they know it thousands, if not millions, of people have seen it and shared it. Viral videos can be about anything, but are often simple and humorous, with topics ranging from cats, pranks, kids that are high after dental surgery, and more cats. However, some of the most viral videos aren't funny at all. For example, the Kony 2012 video by Invisible Children, Inc. is seen as the most viral video in history after reaching 34,000,000 views in its first 24 hours. To date, the most viewed video in the history of YouTube is the music video for Gangnam Style by PSY, which has over 2.25 BILLION VIEWS.

YouTube changed the marketing game in a big way. Now advertisers can upload their videos online much cheaper than it costs to advertise on television with the potential for huge exposure. Of course, nobody can guarantee a viral video but it is a good goal to aim for.



PewDiePie, a popular YouTube celebrity who primarily plays video games, has the most subscribed channel with over 36 million subscribers and over 8.5 billion total views.

# PURPOSE

At Insightrix Research, we set out to make a fun video that showed a little about who we are. Before we knew it, our “little” video had a quarter of a million views and was featured in news outlets across the country.

The following white paper will highlight what makes a viral video, as well as the data, and feedback that we received from our video, which was entitled, SaskatcheWHAT?!

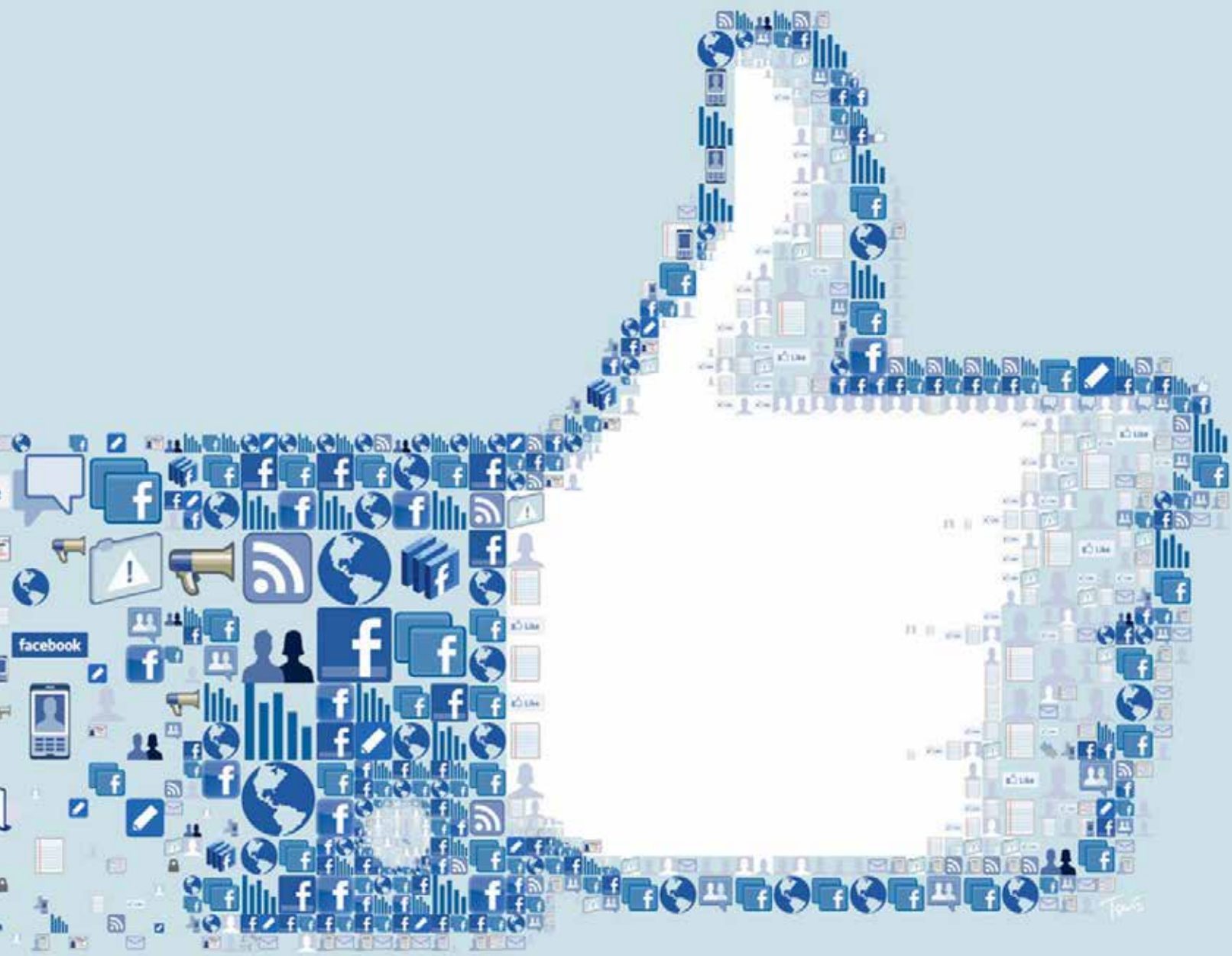


# THIS HISTORY OF VIRAL VIDEOS

Before YouTube and the rise of social media giants, like Facebook and Twitter, viral videos and marketing were spread through email. One of the first examples of a viral video, was a stop animation video called, “The Spirit of Christmas”, which was produced in 1995 by South Park creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone. This was the video that launched their careers.



The Spirit of Christmas, which went viral over email in 1995, features Jesus fighting Santa Claus until figure skater Brian Boitano shows up and teaches everyone the true meaning of Christmas.



As computers increased in popularity it required marketing specialists to think differently. With the rise of computer viruses, a notion was spread that ideas are able to spread much like viruses. This thought led to the development of the field memetics, which is the study of this phenomena. Although it's difficult to pinpoint where exactly the term viral marketing originated, the term was popularized by Jeffrey Rayport, a Harvard Business School graduate, in an article for Fast Company entitled, "The Virus of Marketing". It was also used in 1997 to describe Hotmail's methods of only advertising through their customer's outgoing email messages. As more and more people saw and received the advertisement, more and more would sign up, which led to an exponential increase in exposure.

# ***THE VIRAL MARKETING ADVANTAGE***

**I**n the days of magazine and newspaper advertisements, the only way to wow your audience was with an amazing product. To get people talking, it really had to be something amazing that they hadn't seen before. Imagine witnessing the first televisions and microwaves being sold. Things people take for granted today were once revolutionary products.

**Now, the message and method of communicating a product can be considered as, or even more important, than the product itself in terms of advertising.**

**For example, think of a recent Old Spice advertisement. Old Spice carries a wide variety of male grooming products and was founded in 1934, however, due to the success of their viral advertising, which is more about being strange and humorous than about the brand, Old Spice has a renewed image despite having the same products.**

**The initial commercial, "The Man Your Man Could Smell Like" was so successful that it won the Grand Prix for film at the Cannes Lions International Advertising Festival, and a Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Commercial.**



# SaskatcheWHAT?!

## Premise

**S**askatcheWHAT?! is a promotional video that highlights Insightrix's expertise in research, especially within the Canadian prairies. The video starts with two hotshot focus group moderators from a large, unnamed city. The moderators begin the Saskatchewan focus group, but quickly realize they are in over their heads when the focus group attendees begin to speak using some of Saskatchewan's most colourful slang. The moderators have to fly back to their head office with an incomplete project and try and explain to their boss why they failed. The boss interrupts them by picking up the phone and menacingly telling them he is calling the people he should have phoned in the first place — Insightrix. Next, an Insightrix moderator leading the same attendees into a focus group. The final shot shows the group talking and laughing as the focus group proceeds swimmingly before fading to black.



## THE VIDEO



Please click the thumbnail above or click [HERE](#) to view our video, **SaskatcheWHAT?!**

**I'VE GOT A FEVER,  
AND THE ONLY  
PRESCRIPTION, IS MORE  
SASKATCHEWHAT?!**



# WHAT MAKES A VIDEO GO VIRAL?

By definition a viral video is a clip that is spread and shared like a virus, reaching a large quantity of viewers in a short amount of time. YouTube and various other social media websites make sharing easier than ever, but your content has to be something that is worth sharing, which brings us to the most important points to creating a viral video.



## 1) MAKE IT WORTH SHARING

Your content has to be good enough that it will make people want to share. This is the most essential ingredient to making a viral video. *SaskatcheWHAT?!*, began to receive media attention because of its content — even though it was strictly promotional. It was first picked up on CBC radio where it started a discussion about the unique slang within Saskatchewan. From there, a story was written specifically about the video on The Huffington Post Canada, which is where it began to pick up a massive amount of viewers. The story was

titled, “They speak a different language in Saskatchewan. Here’s Proof.” A very catchy and attention grabbing headline that led people to watching, and more importantly sharing, the video. About five and a half weeks after publishing the article, the story now has **42,000 Facebook likes, 10,577 Facebook shares, and 177 tweets**. Shortly after the article was posted on The Huffington Post, *SaskatcheWHAT?!* reached its peak viewership of approximately 9,500 views per hour.

## 2) KEEP IT SIMPLE

Generally, a good rule of thumb is to make very short videos that people can watch quickly, but not all popular videos are short. If your video is short (30 seconds or less) it doesn’t need to be as captivating. It just needs to be amusing enough for people to share. Just take a look at any cat video on the Internet.

Longer videos need to be much more developed because they need to be able

to hold people’s attention for the length of video — something that is getting more and more difficult as attention spans get lower.

*SaskatcheWHAT?!* is over 3 minutes long. As far as commercials go, this is quite long. So why would people want to take the time to watch it, and what would make them share it? This brings us to our next point.



# 3) KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

Even though our commercial is somewhat long, SaskatcheWHAT?! achieved quite a high retention rate. Viewers watched an average of 2:41 of it, or 86%. Why were our viewers willing to sit through a three minute video? Because it was something they could relate to.

When we set out to make a video, we wanted to create something fun that showed off our personality as a company. So what was the key to success? While writing the script we really thought about who we wanted to see this video. The answer was people from the prairie provinces of Canada, because that's who we are. We tailored our video to the people of the Canadian prairies by focusing on Saskatchewan slang words. The result went even better than expected. As hoped, the people of Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Manitoba shared the video with enthusiasm. Based on the feedback we received from Twitter,

Facebook, and various other sources it was clear that not only were people amused by our advertisement, but they rallied behind it. They did so with pride because it showcased the uniqueness of the prairies in a way that isn't often portrayed in the media.

One unexpected outcome was the reach of our commercial. Not only were people sharing it within Saskatchewan, but people were sharing it across the country to show their friends how unique and foreign Saskatchewan slang can be.

Another aspect that became clear throughout this process was the sheer amount of Saskatchewanians who live abroad, but still feel a connection to their home. The video was played in 174 countries and we received feedback from Saskatchewanians living all around the world who had seen the video:





New submission on form:

## Contact Us

On landing page:

## Market Research Company Contact | Saskatchewan | Horsham

First Name:

[REDACTED]

Last Name:

[REDACTED]

Email:

[REDACTED]

Message:

**Brilliant!!** The Huff Post article and vid are making its rounds in Tokyo. As a guy born and raised in Regina, working years for market research companies [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], I thought brilliant. That's what I call local insights. Cheers to you all and especially the brains behind that one. Classic.

Contact:

[REDACTED]

[View contact in HubSpot](#)

**It just goes to show that you can take the people out of the prairies, but you can't take the prairies out of the people!**

# DATA

## VIEWERSHIP



APPROXIMATELY  
**286,725** TOTAL VIEWS

APPROXIMATELY **741,827**  
MINUTES WATCHED



## LIKES



**300**



**39**

## GENDER DEMOGRAPHICS

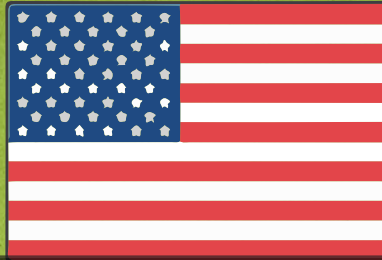


**61%**



**39%**

## TOP 5 PLAYBACK LOCATIONS



PLAYED IN 174 COUNTRIES



## DEVICES

### MOBILE PHONE



=



### COMPUTER



=



### TABLET



=



\*PERCENT OF TOTAL VIEWS

# The Process

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Once SaskatcheWHAT?! was finalized and approved, we uploaded it to our Insinhtrix YouTube page ahead of schedule. The initial plan was to hold on to the video and wait to release, but after showing staff around the office, they were eager to share with friends and family members. The video was uploaded on a Friday, and by the following Monday, there were over 3,000 views. Not too many, but it was exciting. That afternoon we received a call from CBC radio about featuring the commercial on the Afternoon Show, along with interviewing the director of the video, Huw Evans of Eye Catcher video. The next day it was picked up by The Huffington Post and the rest is history.

As far as advertisement and promotion for SaskatcheWHAT?! go, it was almost non-existent. We began promoting it on Facebook after The Huffington Post article was published. We limited the promoted post to Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba and spent a grand total of \$77 CAD for a simple Facebook boost.



# Conclusion

Our success in creating SasktcheWHAT?! was an overwhelmingly positive experience, that came with a lot of benefits, such as:

- Helping Insightrix achieve massive exposure and recognition of our brand within our main and extended trade areas
- Improved flow rate in our survey call centre due to increased recognition
- Increased recruitment to our online survey panel, SaskWatch Research™
- Helped to solidify our image as a true prairie company



THANKS  
FOR  
READING!



The background of the slide is a photograph of a city in winter. A river flows through the center, with ice patches visible. A large, multi-arched stone bridge spans the river on the right side. The city skyline is visible in the background, with several buildings. The foreground is filled with bare, snow-covered trees. The sky is overcast and grey.

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**Insightrix Research Inc.**  
Saskatoon, SK | Canada  
1-866-888-5640

E: [info@insightrix.com](mailto:info@insightrix.com)  
W: [www.insightrix.com](http://www.insightrix.com)