



2022 Growth Guide

for Developing Artists on YouTube



Introduction

We followed a group of artists participating in YouTube's [Foundry](#) and [#YouTubeBlackVoicesFund](#) programs, to share examples of how you can utilize creativity and collaboration to make moves on YouTube. The data you'll see for each artist doesn't imply a direct correlation with the topic, and the artists may have been promoting their music in other ways simultaneously.

Use this guide to get ideas and inspiration from developing artists.

You'll learn how global artists like Tokischa, Japanese Breakfast, and Fireboy DML promote their music and grow their fan bases on YouTube—and how you can, too.

1

Establish Your Channel

- **CHANNEL OPTIMIZATION:** serpentwithfeet
- **VIDEO OPTIMIZATION:** Joy Oladokun

2

Build Anticipation for Your Premieres

- **LIVE REDIRECT:** Tokischa and ROSALÍA, Japanese Breakfast
- **TRAILERS:** chilldspot

3

Stay Close With Your Fans

- **SHORTS:** Ambar Lucid, Marina Sena
- **LIVE STREAMING:** Sycco, Fireboy DML, Shygirl, Snail Mail

1

Establish Your Channel

Over one billion people visit YouTube every month, meaning there's a lot of potential fans of your music. Take a cue or two from **serpentwithfeet** or **Joy Oladokun**, who demonstrate a handful of easy ways to customize your Official Artist Channel and help your music get discovered on YouTube.

serpentwithfeet

Learn more about setting up your channel for success >



Your **Official Artist Channel** is your music's home on YouTube. **Design it with intention** to help viewers understand who you are and what kind of music you make. Let's take a look at how experimental artist **serpentwithfeet** customizes their channel to reflect their style and top priorities.

Choose a Featured Video

- The video at the top of your channel's home page is your featured video. Like **serpentwithfeet**, many artists put their most recent release or most popular video there to pique fans' interest. Your featured video will play automatically for non-subscribers and you can select a different video for your subscribers to see when they visit your channel.

Create Channel Sections and Playlists

- **serpentwithfeet** created a variety of channel sections to visually organize their videos, and gave each section a descriptive title so fans can find what they're looking for. These include Official Music Videos, videos from their latest project ("DEACON"), live performances ["serpent (Live)"], a branded campaign ("2021 Orbitz Pride Campaign"), collaborations ("ft. serpent"), and festival performances ("Planet Afropunk").

Upload a Channel Banner

- **serpentwithfeet** uploaded a channel banner – the image across the top of a channel – that reflects their brand. This is the perfect place to promote upcoming album releases or time with your tours. [Click here](#) for information on file sizes and guidelines for channel banners.

By the Numbers (6-mo growth)

- From December 2020 to June 2021, **serpentwithfeet's** video views grew by **585%** and their subscribers grew by **98%**.

Joy Oladokun

Learn more about setting up your channel for success >



First impressions can be game-changing.

As demonstrated by singer-songwriter **Joy Oladokun**, the titles, images, and descriptions of your videos can help define your message and grow your fan base.

Use Descriptive Titles

- Titles and descriptions help fans decide what to click on and can affect where your music appears in search results. Consider naming your video with the most searchable terms, like your name or band's name and the track name first. Take the video title "**Joy Oladokun - someone that i used to be (official visualizer)**" – it begins with her name, then the song's title, then a quick description of the type of video to expect. How might you describe what's happening in your video in a social caption? How would you type it out in a text to your friend? Clear, conversational language can bring your titles to life.

Create Compelling Thumbnails

- Take photos during your video shoot that you can use as thumbnails for your video, like the one **Joy Oladokun** uses for "someone that i used to be." Thumbnails work best when they give enough info about a video so fans can make a solid choice about whether to watch it or not. Try bright, high-contrast, and zoomed-in images, and embrace thumbnails that feel close up, feature the faces of notable people in the video, and tell an accurate story. If you have a series of videos with similar thumbnails, you may want to add text to distinguish one video from the others, but there's no need to add text to thumbnails unless it adds something vital. [View the thumbnail here.](#)

Write Helpful Descriptions

- Video descriptions can describe your video and promote your tour, album, downloads, merch, and social media links. In her description for "someone that i used to be," **Joy Oladokun** writes a short description of the song with links to stream her music and follow her on social media, plus full song lyrics. All of these elements help Oladokun's fans discover her video on YouTube. [View the video here.](#)

By the Numbers (6-mo growth)

- From December 2020 to June 2021, **Joy Oladokun's** video views **grew by 213%** and her subscribers **grew by 229%**.

2

Build Anticipation for Your Premieres

Schedule Premieres for your priority releases and encourage fans to tune in. Viewers can start interacting through comments and in the live chat on the watch page before and during your Premieres. Keep reading for real-life examples of **how developing artists made their Premieres for new music into memorable fan events.**

Tokischa and ROSALÍA

[Learn more about Premieres, Live Redirect, and eligibility for both >](#)



Grab fans' attention by hosting a live stream, also known as a Live Redirect, before your Premiere. Try going live with a collaborator, like **Tokischa** did with **ROSALÍA** before the release of their collaborative track **"Linda."** Once the live stream ends, your viewers will automatically move to your Premiere. Going live before your Premiere builds anticipation for your drop and encourages fans to get involved in the live chat and comments.

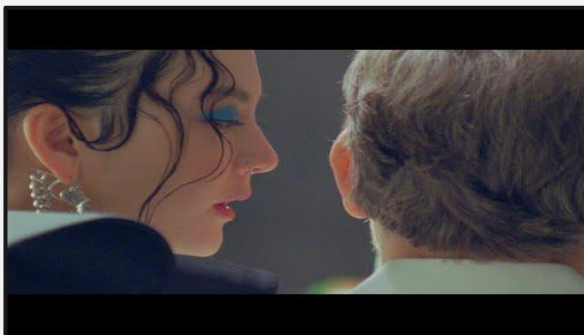
By the Numbers

- The live redirect with **ROSALÍA** helped the **"Linda"** official music video to be **Tokischa's best performing to date*** and it saw **602% more views in the first week than average.** (based on official music videos released after 2019)

*Data as of Nov 2021

Japanese Breakfast

[Learn more about Premieres and Live Redirect >](#)



Japanese Breakfast gave fans a front row seat to her **premiere of “Savage Good Boy”** with an added bonus – a live fan Q&A session beforehand with actor Michael Imperioli, a collaborator on the video. This kind of interactive sneak-peek helps fans feel like they’re part of an exclusive moment. This video also had the highest performing first week of any video on Japanese Breakfast’s channel at the time.

By the Numbers

- The Live Redirect for **“Savage Good Boy”** in May ‘21 saw **183%** more live views than **Japanese Breakfast’s** past live streams on average.

chilldspot

[Learn more about Trailers and check your eligibility >](#)



Before launch day, give your fans a taste of your upcoming video drop by adding a trailer to your premiere watch page (if you're [eligible](#)). Tokyo group **chilldspot**, for example, uploaded a trailer to build hype for their **premiere of "Groovynight."** Trailers will play for viewers on your premiere watch page before the event starts.

By the Numbers

- **chilldspot's** new subscriber count grew **76%** between the 2 weeks before the event and the 2 weeks after it.

3

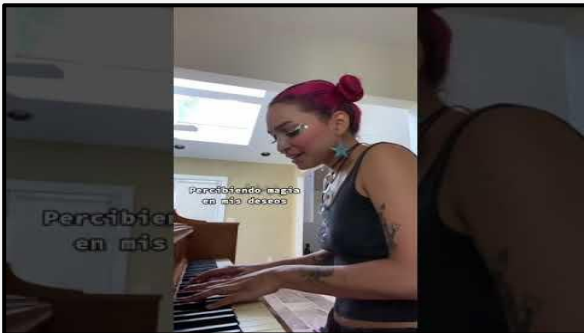
Stay Close With Your Fans

Videos about your life outside of music can distinguish your channel, and help turn casual viewers into loyal supporters.

Here are some content ideas you can use to create stronger ties to your fans, increase views and subscribers, and even help influence how your music is shared and recommended on YouTube.

Ambar Lucid

[Learn more about YouTube Shorts in the YouTube Help Center >](#)



Stay top-of-mind for fans even when you're between official music videos! Ambar used shorts to casually sing over tracks where lyrics appear on screen, shared pre-edited behind-the-scenes content, and more. **Like Ambar, consider using the content and resources you have on hand to engage with Shorts in a way that teases your upcoming releases, or points back to your recent ones.**

By the Numbers*

- 23 Shorts
- 18K views
- 106 shares
- 1.7K likes
- Added 50 subscribers

*Data as of Nov 2021

Marina Sena

[Learn more about YouTube Shorts in the YouTube Help Center >](#)



When Brazilian pop artist **Marina Sena's "POR SUPUESTO" went viral on other Short Form Video platforms, she also saw a huge spike in traffic to the song's visualizer on YouTube.** To capitalize on that momentum, she began engaging with Shorts on YouTube to increase engagement. Since the official music video was still a few weeks away, **Shorts gave her a chance to tell more of a visual story around the viral hit.** In the above Short she's performing the song but in others she thanked fans for listening, danced to the song, showed off different looks, shared concert footage and more.

By the Numbers

- **5.7K shorts uploaded using "POR SUPUESTO"**
- **Gaining 1M views from additional Shorts**

*Data as of Nov 2021

Sycco

[Learn more about live streaming in the YouTube Help Center >](#)



Use a combination of live tools to immerse fans in your highest priority releases. For example, Australian artist **Sycco promoted her debut EP “Sycco’s First EP” with a live stream play-through of the project** (using an [encoder](#) to enhance the production value), complete with a live redirect, premiere, trailer, live chat Q&A, and shorts. **This mix resulted in Sycco’s best performing official music video launch to date*.**

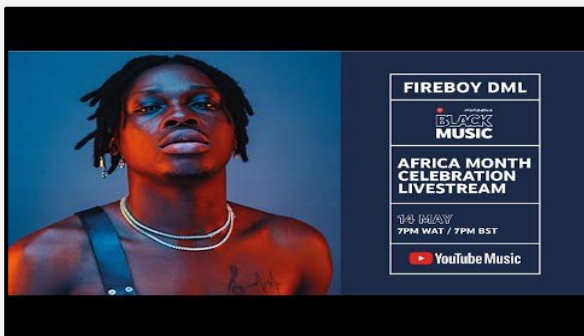
By the Numbers

- **Sycco’s** new subscriber count grew **168%** between the 2 weeks before the release and the 2 weeks after it.

*Data as of Nov 2021

Fireboy DML

[Learn more about live streaming in the YouTube Help Center >](#)



Touring can be complicated. While you can't make it to every city, you can turn any living room into a concert hall on YouTube, and show new fans around the world how you bring your songs to life. **Fireboy DML recorded this 15-minute concert showcase of songs from his project APOLLO, creating an intimate, can't-miss event for audiences near and far.**

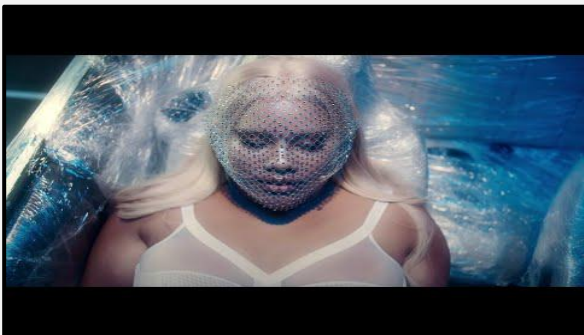
By the Numbers

- **Fireboy DML's** performance video saw **151% more live views** than his average live views to date.

*Data as of Nov 2021

Shygirl

[Learn more about Premieres and Live Redirect in the YouTube Help Center >](#)



There's no limit to what you can do creatively with Premieres. Entertain fans during your releases by planning a series of events for them on YouTube, like **Shygirl, who promoted her EP "Alias" with the Premiere of a 15-minute-long performance film.** Over the next couple of weeks, Shygirl kept her fans engage

By the Numbers

- **Shygirl's** new subscriber count **grew 239%** between the 2 weeks before the live performance video and the 2 weeks after it.

*Data as of Nov 2021

Snail Mail

See even more video ideas for artists on the YouTube Creators Channel. >



To celebrate Halloween and promote a [music video](#) that starred a cool pup, indie rock powerhouse **Snail Mail staged a “Snail Mail Rates Your Dogs” contest, asking fans to submit photos of their dogs in costume.** Then, she selected her favorites and shouted them out in a special “Snail Mail Rates Your Dogs” live event.

By the Numbers

- **11.5K views to date*** of “Snail Mail Rates Your Dogs”

*Data as of Nov 2021

More Resources

- Find resources: artists.youtube
- Connect with service providers: servicesdirectory.withyoutube.com
- Get the latest YouTube news: blog.youtube