

WHERE TO HOST VIDEOS FOR YOUR MEMBERSHIP





- Mike Morrison: Hello there. Welcome to episode 154 of The Membership Guy's Podcast with me, Mike Morrison, your host for this show that will help you to grow a successful membership website.
- Mike Morrison: Hope you're doing fine, hope you're having a great week. Thank you for spending a little part of your day with me, hopefully I can make it worth your while with another dose of membership advice.
- Mike Morrison: Today we're talking all about video hosting. Where should you host video's for your membership? We see this question coming up so many times inside our Facebook group and inside our own community where people are struggling to figure out what the best option is for hosting videos for their member content, videos for promotion that they use within their marketing, videos that they use on their sales pitch and so on and, so on.
- Mike Morrison: So today we're going to set the record straight on what the best option, the best solution is for video hosting as well as what you should absolutely avoid.
- Mike Morrison: So, when it comes to video hosting, essentially it boils down to six main choices. Store the videos on your own website or on your own server, store them in a Dropbox account or a Google Drive folder, store them on a service like Amazon S3 which is a file hosting service, host them on YouTube which of course is the most popular video hosting website around and the second largest search engine on the internet. And then the last two options are to either host them on Wistia, so that's wistia.com or host them on Vimeo so, those two are alternative video hosting services. So those are your six main choices.
- Mike Morrison: So, we're going to go through them one-by-one and just talk about whether or not they're a suitable choice for hosting your membership videos.
- Mike Morrison: So, first of all, storing videos on your own website. This is a huge, huge, no-no in almost every case. First of all, if you're hosting videos on your web hosting account it's going to eat up your server space so, whether you're on shared hosting, whether you've got your own dedicated server, you have a limited allocation of space and a very quick way to use up all of that space is by uploading video files. You've got to remember that video file sizes are usually a heck of a lot bigger than images or PDF's and other types of files and, if you're hosting those video files on your own server it's also going to slow your website down so you're going to be taking up a lot of bandwidth when people watch your videos and that's going to affect other areas of your site, it's going to affect load time, performance and all that sort of stuff.
- Mike Morrison: Plus, when you're actually uploading the videos yourself, that's also going to slow down your server, it's going to use up a lot of your server resources. So your members, your website visitors, they're going to suffer as well. It's also a much more complicated process to upload, host and then embed video's if those files are being stored on your own site. So, if you're using WordPress, for example, chances are you don't have any problems at all uploading images directly through WordPress through their media library but, it's going to be a whole different story if you try to upload videos that was





because the files, again, are much, much bigger, the uploading process takes much longer and most servers restrict how big files can be when you're uploading them directly through your website.

Mike Morrison: So, in most cases, the only way you'd be able to upload them is by using something called, FTP and if you don't know what FTP is, then that's probably a good sign that you shouldn't be going in this direction. And, it's also likely that your hosting company will have restrictions in place preventing or restricting you from hosting and streaming videos. So, if you're actually doing that, you're risking spanked on that front too and that can have major implications for your website. And by the way, because web hosts aren't typically set up to support streaming videos, they don't have their servers configured appropriately, then even putting everything else aside, the videos, when people watch them, they're going to be slow to load, they're going to buffer a lot more than people would expect because they're not being delivered from a source that is built specifically to deliver video.

Mike Morrison: And then finally, if you're doing it through this way you're also going to need to find a plugin and some code that you can embed into your site, you'll actually need to find a video player plugin that gives you the code that you embed in your site. It's not like YouTube and others where, after you've uploaded your video, you just get the embed code given to you, you're going to have to figure that piece of the puzzle out yourself. So, overall, it's a lot more convoluted, a lot more complicated, there's so many more pitfalls and potential problems and the end result is actually going to be pretty poor performance when it comes to people actually watching those videos.

Mike Morrison: So, hosting video files on your own site, if they are for viewing and they're not for downloading and even if they are for downloading, I would still not recommend putting them on your own site because, again, it's taking up storage, taking up bandwidth but hosting videos on your own site is a no-no.

Mike Morrison: Hosting on Dropbox, Google Drive or even Amazon S3 suffer from similar problems, limit on storage space, possible contravention of terms and conditions in the case of Dropbox and Google. Amazon S3 isn't as restricted and the storage space on Amazon is relatively cheap but again, none of these three options are purpose built for hosting and streaming videos. When you use a proper video host, their servers are not only fine tuned for the sole purpose of serving up video fast and without problems with buffering but also, when you upload the video file itself, it gets optimized to reduce the file size as much as possible without spoiling the video. So, this means less storage taking up, this means videos load quicker, they perform better and it's overall a much better experience for the people viewing the video.

Mike Morrison: None of that stuff happens with the likes of Dropbox, Amazon, Google Drive and so on because they are not built for the purpose of being video hosts. It's also harder to control and limit access through those types of services too so a member could easily just share the video link to your video that you're hosting on Dropbox or Amazon, they could just share that link to their friends and, frankly, there'd be nothing that you can do.





Mike Morrison: So, for hosting video that you will be embedding on your website where your members will be logging in and actually viewing the video on your site, definitely go with a proper video hosting service, not just somewhere that hosts files. You know if you want to host images, you've got tools or downloads, PDF's and all that sort of stuff that your members will be downloading, then that's where things like Amazon S3 are worth looking at. But for video hosting, you should use a proper video hosting service and there are three main choices you have on that front. YouTube, Vimeo and Wistia.

Mike Morrison: Now of course YouTube are the ones that absolutely everybody listening will have heard of and you definitely want to have any free videos that you're using as part of your content marketing strategy, for example, you definitely want those to be on YouTube because the audience there is huge, the discoverability for those videos is huge but, you shouldn't be hosting your paid membership videos on there. And the main reason for that is there is not good way of restricting that content to only your members.

Mike Morrison: So quite often what people do is, they'll upload videos for their courses, for their workshops, the replay videos from webinars and stuff, they'll upload those to YouTube and they'll set them to unlisted and then they think that's enough to protect it so they just embed the unlisted video inside their membership but they don't realize that, A; Anybody who has a direct link to an unlisted video can watch it on the YouTube website. So again, your members can quite easily share the direct YouTube link with their friends and there's nothing you can do about it.

Mike Morrison: So A; Anybody with a link to an unlisted video can watch it and B; Unlisted videos will still show up in a Google Search. Now, you can set YouTube videos to be protected, fully private but then only people that you personally invite via email can watch them and frankly, this is impractical for a membership site. So, for content marketing, video blogs and so on, then absolutely put that content on YouTube but steer clear when it comes to your member content.

Mike Morrison: So, that leaves us with Vimeo and Wistia and of those two, our recommendation would absolutely be Vimeo. Both of these services offer amazing features. They are both great video hosting services. You will need to pay for them but, in Vimeo's case, it's real good value for money when you look at the features you actually get.

Mike Morrison: Now, not only do both of these services, Vimeo and Wistia allow you to do things like customize and brand the video player, view in depth statistics on how people are actually consuming your video and so on, the most important thing that they give you is a great deal of control over where your video can be embedded and watch. You can actually restrict your video so that they can only ever be embedded and watched on your specific website, they cannot be viewed and they cannot be watched anywhere else. So they won't show in search, they can't be viewed with a direct link and, even if somebody happened to have the embed code for the video and they just put it on their own website so they were trying to rip your content off, the video wouldn't play because you restrict that video's playback to your specific domain name.

Mike Morrison: That's the level of control you need when it comes to your paid content as a membership





site owner. You cannot allow your paid content to be compromised by having it publicly available for anybody, member or not, to watch as it would be on YouTube, you need to lock that stuff down and Vimeo and Wistia will both allow you to do this.

Mike Morrison: Now, the reason I recommend Vimeo really comes down to price. Wistia has some very, very cool features, it's a very neat video hosting company, lots of awesome stuff that it does and perhaps it's got even better stats and analytics than Vimeo does but, they are very, very, very expensive by comparison and honestly, Vimeo, they're catching up, they're closing that gap in terms of the features that you get for your money.

Mike Morrison: Now sometimes what we see people doing is using Wistia to host a handful of their important marketing videos. So for example, if you have a sales place that has a sales video, one of those, you know, 15, 20 minute long sales videos then quite often people will host those on Wistia so that they can take advantage of the superior stats and reporting. And Wistia's free plan does allow you to have three video's all be it they will stick their branding on your video which for a lot of people, that's a no go.

Mike Morrison: But if you've got more than just a handful of videos, then Wistia is going to get pricey. Vimeo is a steal by comparison. So, Vimeo Pro which is the option that we recommend and, by the way, Vimeo does have a free option but obviously it doesn't have a lot of the features we're talking about here. If you want all of that good stuff, Vimeo Pro is the one you want to go with and, that works out at around \$14 per month. By comparison, Wistia is \$99 per month and, you also then have to pay 25 cents per month extra for each video that you upload to Wistia. Oh actually, no, they give you your first 10 videos for free and that's free in quotation marks because, you know, you're paying 100 bucks for the privilege so no, it's not free.

Mike Morrison: This means that if you have 200 videos in your membership, and honestly, that's not uncommon, in certain types of membership that would actually be a drop in the ocean. But, lets say you have 200 videos in your membership, then if you are using Wistia, that 100 bucks becomes 150 bucks per month and that cost is going to go up and up and up and up with every new video you add. Sure, it's only 25 cents per month for each video but, you know, over the course of a year that works out to \$3 and that's \$3 for every single video that you have hosted on Wistia and again, that price is going to go up and up and up the more content you put out there. Whereas Vimeo, is \$14 a month and you get a very, very generous upload allowance that most memberships aren't going to come anywhere near. There's no additional charges or any of that nonsense.

Mike Morrison: And by the way, usually when you have people doing this whole kind of comparison of what service you should use and what have you, usually there's an affiliate link hiding somewhere, that's not the case here. We don't get any kick back, we don't get any payment from Vimeo for recommending you use them instead of Wistia. We're just speaking from experience here, we use Vimeo ourselves, we get nothing in exchange for it, it's just that when it comes down to it, it is the clear choice in 99% of cases.

Mike Morrison: Now, sometimes you will have issues with certain countries. I believe there's countries in Asia where sometimes there's issues with Vimeo videos being blocked and so on and





so, as with everything, do your own research, do your own due diligence but hopefully the information from today's episode has helped you get clarity on where you should be hosting your membership videos.

Mike Morrison: So, there we have it, YouTube for your free marketing content, for video blogs and anything else where you want to reach a huge audience, Vimeo for anything that's going inside your membership and, at a stretch, maybe use Wistia for your sales pitch video but, to be honest, having their branding slapped on there, probably isn't worth the trade-off in order to get marginally better statistics. So, my advice, just stick with Vimeo.

Mike Morrison: But more importantly than any of that, whatever you do, absolutely do not host videos on your own website. Hopefully this has helped you out if this has been an area where you're not too sure on or perhaps you've started putting videos on YouTube and you've got bit in the backside or maybe this is the fist you're hearing about the fact that actually all of your protected membership content is publicly available on YouTube if it's on there. If you're just finding that out now, sorry but, you know, get it all on to Vimeo and you'll be sorted.

Mike Morrison: That's it from me for this week. Hopefully this has been useful for you. I'll be back again next week with another installment of The Membership Guy's Podcast.

