



TWO YOUTUBE VIDEOS

ONE WEEK

1 MILLION VIEWS

"All we can say is, brilliant marketing that will have the gaming industry buzzing for a while."

- examiner.com

INTERESTED?

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(How a brand new production team scored a hit with an online viral campaign for an imaginary video game console in June, 2010.)

WHAT WE DID

This video has not been confirmed to be connected with Sony or the PlayStation. It is slick and professional, yes, but is it from Sony? And what parts of it are from Sony?

- Brian Ashcraft, Kotaku.com

In early June 2010, the global video game community was convinced Sony might announce the release of a new PlayStation 4 console at the Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3). One week before E3, two mysterious clips appeared on YouTube showing a PS4 prototype being tested in a secret laboratory. Whether one thought the clips were real or fake, everybody was talking about it.

Eventually it was revealed that the clips were a hoax created by Dummy Pilot, two recent NYU film school grads with an affinity for video games and viral marketing. Though Sony denied association, the "Now Testing" campaign made an indelible impression on the gaming world, reviewed by thousands of sites, blogs, and forums, and gathering over 1 million views in their weeklong run.

HOW WE DID IT

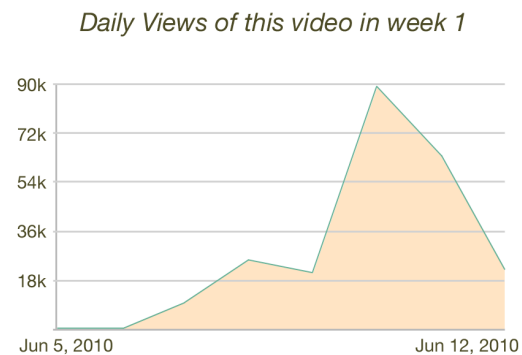
After we spent several months watching other PlayStation commercials and researching the PlayStation fan base, we came up with the following premise for our campaign: somewhere in Japan, in a secret facility run by Sony Computer Entertainment, experimental models of the PS4 were being tested on live subjects with strange but exciting results. The clips would appear to be leaked footage from this facility, with a consistent aesthetic and characters.

We knew from the start that few people would believe such a thing (though some did). But that was not our objective. The principle goal of the campaign was simply to generate discussion about the possibility of a PS4 release. We wanted viewers to argue, criticize and theorize. In aid of this, we also made a conscious effort to embed as many clues, contradictions, and references as possible for them to talk about



THE VIRAL TEASER

Two Japanese scientists rush frantically to contain what appears to be a critical situation in some kind of lab facility. They enter a room and find a paralyzed man on the ground, tightly gripping some obscured device. He shrieks as they try to pry it from his hands, a television in the background undulating with a PlayStation logo. The video abruptly ends and cuts to a test card: "PS4 V3.1 - Please Wait a Moment"



Number of views in the first week: 229,137*

Total number of views (as of Sept. 2010) Approaching 400,000

*The number of views in the first week of release of the combined two videos exceeded well over 1 million when factoring in the views from the multitude of other users who "ripped" our original content and reposted it.

WHEN WE DID IT

Even if they are hoaxes, they're pretty cool and worth the two minutes it takes to watch both of them. So watch them, and then tell us if you think these are legit or not, because I don't have a clue.

- Phil Owen, Filefront.com

On Sunday, June 6, 2010, with one week before E3, the first clip was uploaded onto YouTube under the alias 'SCElabs,' and went unnoticed for the first 24 hours. Then on Monday, Kotaku.com, one of the most subscribed-to gaming sites on the web, embedded the clip on their front page. Thousands of subscribers began Tweeting, Digging and linking to the clip. By the following morning,

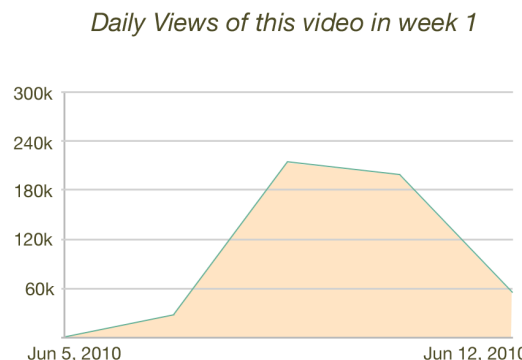
the views had surpassed 40k, with other major sites and hundreds of smaller blogs and forums beginning coverage.

Then on Wednesday, June 9, the second clip was seeded and in just 12 hours, it received over 30k hits. At this point, accredited news sites outside the gaming community, including USA Today, began to pick up the



THE LAUNCH TRAILER

Scientists observe a man behind a two-way mirror as he tests a new 3D video game. His enjoyment turns to bewilderment and then panic as the game world merges with his reality, literally leaping off the screen. He tears his 3D glasses off in terror and stops the game. One scientist exits to notify an authority, but the other stays and continues observing. She smiles when she sees a grin creep along the tester's face



Number of views in the first week: 504,733*

Total number of views (as of Sept. 2010) Over 1 Million

story. The gaming community went into a frenzy, ultimately prompting a statement from Sony PR hardware representative Al de Leon, who stated definitively on Thursday, June 10, that "I can confirm this video is not from SCE [Sony Computer Entertainment.]"

It was a victory for the skeptics and a blow to the believers, but instead of slowing the campaign, the hit count rose even faster. By Thursday night, the views were approaching a staggering 500k. Many were skeptical about Sony's cryptic one-line statement. Others believed the videos were actually for an anticipated PS3-3D announcement. But many simply began to wonder: if it wasn't Sony that created the spots, then who?

By Saturday, June 12, after being online for six days, the campaign had garnered over 750k hits.* It was the Most Viewed and commented video in YouTube's gaming category, and in the top 20 Most Viewed videos overall. That evening, Dummy Pilot's Han West would reveal himself as the creator of the clips.



WHY WE DID IT

YouTube took the clips offline for a time, but the campaign had achieved its mission. Though some in the gaming community were disappointed that the campaign was a hoax, the arguments and discussions endured. Tens of thousands of forum posts, comments, and blog entries continued to speculate about the possibility of a new PS4 – what it would contain, what it would look like, and when it would come out. Then one month after the campaign was over and our YouTube account was reinstated, Sony announced that PS4 was in fact in development.

The comment section of our account is today the primary location where discussions on all levels are taking place in response to these announcements. Some continue to speculate that the campaign was actually contracted by Sony, some continue to chide it for being a fake, but given the clips continue to receive over 150k views a month, one thing is for certain: the buzz around the PS4 has never been greater.

STILL INTERESTED?



DUMMY PILOT is Han West and Warren Tessler. We're a new production team specializing in commercials, music videos, online viral content, and other short-form work.

To view the entire PS4 campaign, our demo reel, original videos, and to find out more about us, please visit www.dummypilot.com

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