

Making Ripples

Making a Difference on YouTube

by Amanda Bancroft

Most often, we think of making a difference with our hands, our money, or our time. But with our videos? The internet (mainly through social media) has become a hub for change makers to reach out to their audience for funding and to spread their mission, and YouTube is no exception. It may seem like a place of pointless and illegal video uploads (yes, it includes those too) or simply a place to go for entertainment, but some YouTube creators are out to change the world and make it a more loving place, one viewer at a time.

And there is a broad range of opinion regarding what a better place looks like, with people from all walks of life and political orientations able to create their own videos for free. Topics range from sustainable products and environmental issues to social justice causes for literally almost any identity. You can freely access nature programming from people with expertise in the sciences as well as from people who have no clue what they're doing. They're all creators trying to share an opinion, spark discussion, make people laugh, or raise awareness about a particular problem (to name a few motivations).

Many YouTube channels that set out to do this have varying levels of subscribers and popularity. The inspirational video series "Kid President" starring child actor Robby Novak and produced by Brad Montague for the channel "SoulPancake" has well over one and a half million subscribers. (Note: the top YouTube channels have billions of views and hundreds of millions of subscribers, and generally tend to offer content about music, kids & family, or entertainment.) Kid President even has his own book, "Kid President's Guide to Being Awesome." Novak enjoys dancing and motivating people to make the world more awesome, despite suffering from Osteogenesis Imperfecta, a condition that makes him susceptible to bone damage (he's endured countless fractures and surgeries). Visit Kid President at [YouTube.com/user/soulpancake](https://www.youtube.com/user/soulpancake)

Another YouTuber with growing popularity whom you may not have heard about is "the1janitor". No, he's not a janitor nor has he ever been employed as one, but some of his content certainly seems to be cleaning up otherwise messy debates that usually elicit disrespectful language from both sides. With several channels on content including video games, the Harry Potter books, relationships, and social justice, there's a good mix of fun and serious world-changing stuff. He often posts on ethical issues and encourages critical thinking, intellectual honesty, equality, and just being a nice person. Maybe it's working: on YouTube, the comments section is typically a hotbed of rude statements, but the1janitor's comments section is rarely plagued by this problem. Visit him at [YouTube.com/user/the1janitor](https://www.youtube.com/user/the1janitor)

Whether a YouTuber posts helpful educational clips that raise awareness, or opinion pieces that seek to spread dialogue and unite warring sides, video has become a far-reaching appendage we can leverage to make a difference.

Amanda Bancroft is a writer, artist, and naturalist building an off-grid cottage for land conservation on Mt. Kessler. She and her husband Ryan blog about their adventures and offer a solar-hosted online educational center on how to make a difference with everyday choices at: www.RipplesBlog.org.