

YouTube

At the start of October, Google acquired YouTube for \$1.65 billion. Is YouTube really worth this amount of money?

1 Match the words (1–4) with their definitions (a–d).

- (1) copyright (a) to buy something, especially a company
 - (2) sue (v) (b) a situation where a disagreement is formally judged in a law court
 - (3) lawsuit (c) to make a legal claim against someone, often because they have done something bad to you
 - (4) acquire (v) (d) the legal right to decide who can make and sell copies of a book, film, piece of music etc.
- (Definitions from or based on: *Macmillan English Dictionary Text* © Bloomsbury Publishing 2002)

2 Complete the Fact box. You can find the missing information by scanning paragraph 2 of the article below.

Fact box: YouTube			
Founded		Video clips viewed per day (approx)	
Headquarters		Employees (approx)	

Google acquires YouTube

You want to watch that amazing goal from one of last week's football matches; or previously rare film of the Beatles in the recording studio; or a video of an advert you missed which everyone at work is talking about. Where do you go? The best place is the YouTube website. YouTube is a video sharing site which lets users upload, view and share video clips. The content is varied, and includes film and TV clips, music videos, sport clips and amateur content such as individual videoblogs. Earlier this month, Google announced that it has reached a deal to acquire the company for a staggering \$1.65 billion.

YouTube was founded in February 2005 by three employees of PayPal. The company, which is based in San Mateo, California, currently has fewer than 70 employees. Like many companies, the firm quickly expanded after receiving initial financial backing. It is now one of the world's fastest-growing websites. 100 million clips are viewed daily. One reason for such incredible growth is

word-of-mouth in the online community. 'Community' is a key word. Users are typically aged between 12 and 17. Even if you think that the many home-made clips are completely worthless, it is hard to deny that the popularity of the site is a cultural phenomenon. It is similar to another site which has a networked community of users: Myspace.

Like Napster, which once promoted free file sharing over the internet, the company started life as an internet 'bad boy'. A lot of the content on the site infringes copyright. However, companies which once looked likely to sue YouTube now seem more interested in doing a deal with the company. Google, which started its own Google Video earlier in the year, recognised the commercial possibilities of cashing in on YouTube's popularity, and the potential to capture the video sharing market by joining forces. The newly acquired company now aims to offer every music video ever made, and still stay free of charge. In the meantime, its three founders, instead of facing a million dollar lawsuit, are laughing all the way to the bank.

3 Read the article. What do you learn about YouTube and the recent acquisition?

4 Write the noun form next to the following verbs.

- (a) to infringe _____ (b) to acquire _____ (c) to operate _____ (d) to replace _____ (e) to create _____
- (f) to back _____ (g) to announce _____ (h) to share _____ (i) to arrange _____ (j) to network _____

5 Work in small groups and discuss the following questions. Be ready to report back your ideas to the class.

- (a) Have you ever visited YouTube or Myspace? If so, what do you think about these sites?
- (b) Do you think the web will soon make it impossible to police copyright infringements?
- (c) Do you think YouTube is worth \$1.65 billion? How do you think Google will earn money from the site?