

Exploring Environmental Media

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THE PROBLEM

Media and general public interest in environmental problems, though growing, is not where it needs to be in order to drive the changes that need to occur. I came to the realization that it is my generation that will be dealing with global climate change, extreme droughts, etc. With this in mind, I sought to reach out to my cohorts as well I knew how: through social media.

My project was necessary because although there is a growing presence of environmental issues in our popular media, there is not enough conversation on these topics among people my age. This complacency is scary because as I stated above, it will be my generation that will make some serious choices in the future. Good knowledge of the issues will be indispensable in order to make the best choices. In an attempt to reach out, I created Today's Planet as an experiment; to see what it would take to change the dialogue among my peers.

Luckily for me, Youtube is owned by Google and has analytics for every channel. This gave me the ability to see not just how many views each video received but for how long on average they were watched. This included each individual state as well as every country abroad. In my first year I received 582 views, 11 subscribers, and a total of 1,023 minutes of view time.

Graphs and Visuals



Although most of my views were in the US, almost 100 of them were outside our borders. In the end I received views from every continent on earth except for Antarctica. My views were low but they travelled far thanks to modern technology.

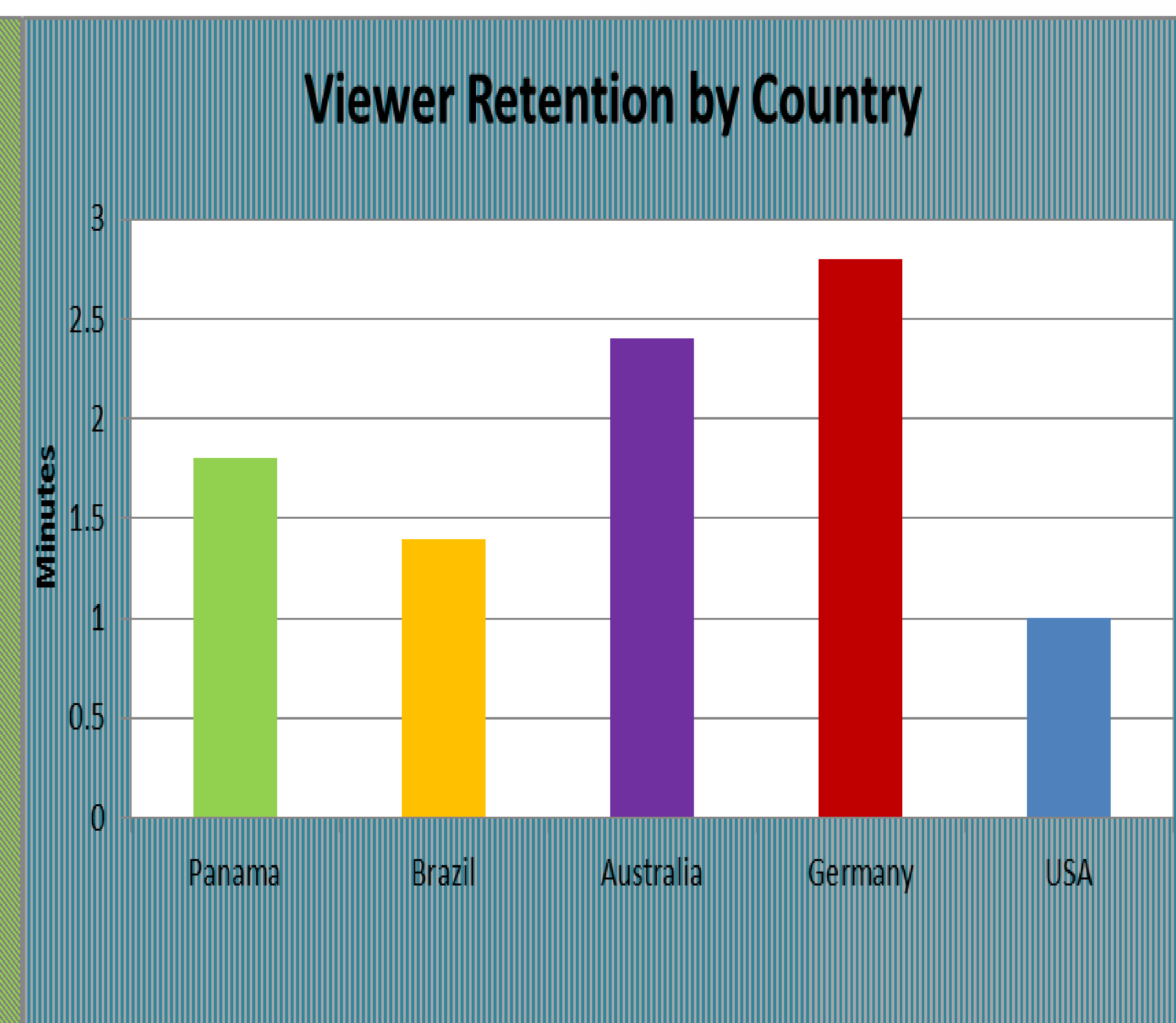
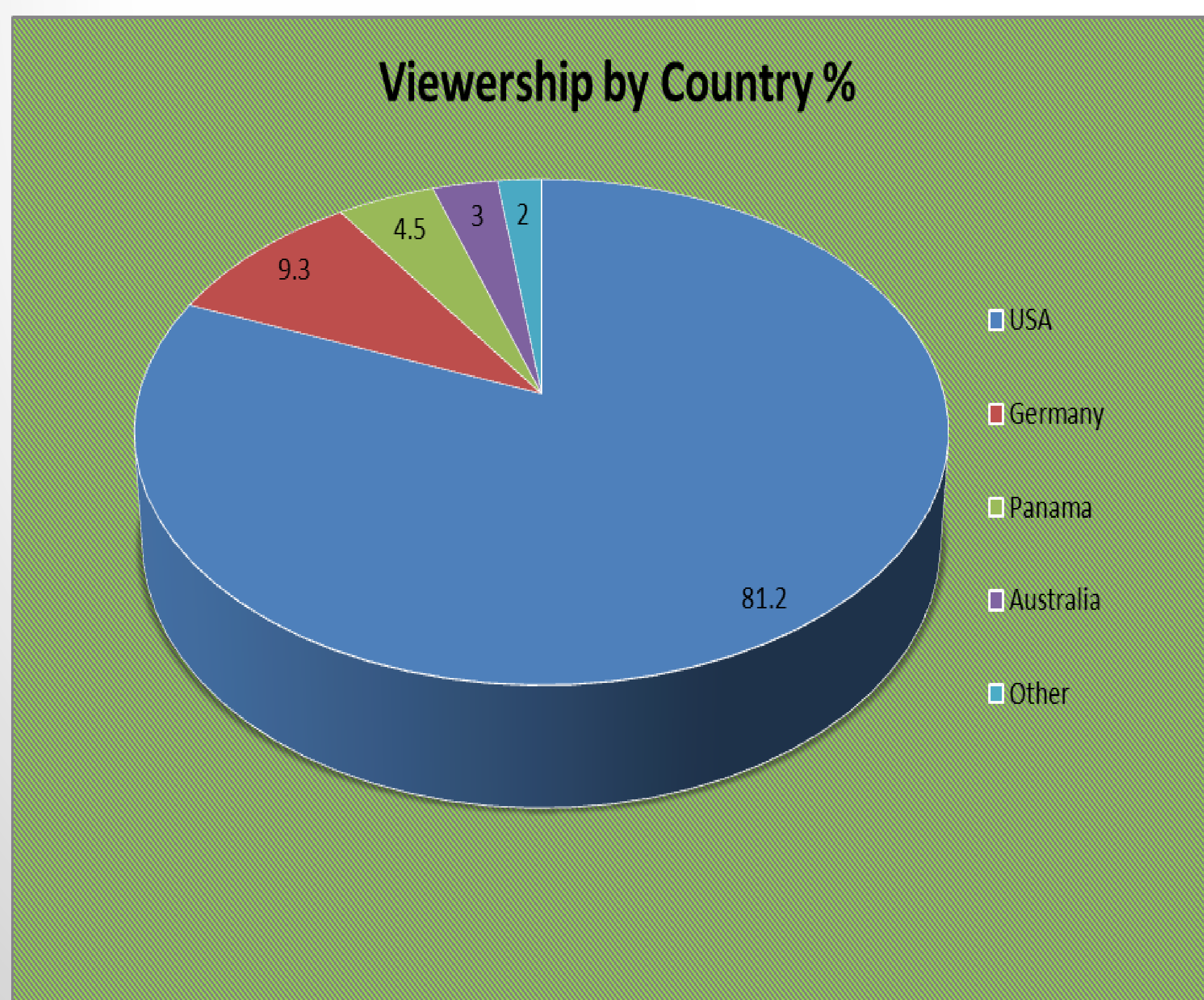
SUSTAINABILITY

How does this apply to Sustainability?

In my Applications of Sustainability class a student asked the professors "Which pillar of Sustainability is most important?" After comments from the class and discussion among the professors they eventually agreed that it was the Social aspect of Sustainability that counted the most. With this in mind, I created Today's Planet in order to focus on the social aspect of environmental issues because without people making a conscious effort to change the status quo advancement among the scientific community does not matter. This is why the news and social media has such a key role in today's world. If we can not convey to the general population the implications of current environmental issues such as global warming or technological advances in a way that catches their attention, then all technological and scientific advancement will be for not.

Making Today's Planet

1. Begin by researching current events that relate to the audience. Usually reading through many news sites outside of the mainstream.
2. Choosing three of the many stories I would pull I made sure that each story was different than the next in order to maintain diversity in my reporting. I would then begin writing, finding transitions and puns to make the show entertaining.
3. Once the script was written I began to film. After running through the script so many times I would do it in front of the camera.
4. Editing would come next, adding pictures and sounds to make the video fun. Once the editing was done I posted the final product on social media.



My average view duration was 51%, meaning on average a viewer watched my videos about half way through until they clicked on something else. Granted, I had lower ended outliers that skewed this percentage. The retention rate, though not ideal, was one of the best feedbacks I could receive in order to improve my show.

What Was Gained

Creating Today's Planet was one of the best decisions that I have made. Taking the leap to try something completely out of my comfort zone was a great learning experience. Reading through the news every day gave me guidance towards my career goals in developing water quality solutions. Putting myself out there also put me in the position to meet and make friends that I would have never met otherwise. The biggest way this enriched my experience here at the University of Arkansas is that I grew a lot as a person. Never had I taken on a project of that magnitude on my own and stuck with it so long.