

From pre-roll quickies to extended video views with WebAfrica

 By [Leigh Andrews](#)

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You may have already encountered WebAfrica's extended pre-roll YouTube ad. In total, it's 2 minutes 47 seconds of, well, skipping, but not in the way you usually associate 'skipping' with 'YouTube ads'.

That alone is hardly headline worthy, as there are a stack of videos on YouTube around that length. Where it does stand out is that this is a pre-roll ad that comes up when you type the topic of your interest into the YouTube search bar, provided you're in an area they service.

Tim Wyatt-Gunning, CEO of Webafrica, explains that the ironic ad – the work of Jupiter Drawing Room Cape Town and iKraal – features an unfit man clad in fitness outfit, equipped with a skipping rope and pleading with you to 'Skip the ad' as Webafrica Fibre is 'FasterFast'. That's it, no further drawing out of the brand message. The longer you take to skip the ad the more breathless our non-athlete becomes, "eventually collapsing in an exhausted heap."

He calls it a "relevant way for us to reach our potential customers, many of whom might be buffered as they watch it on old-school technology."

The ad is embedded below in case you've not yet had the somewhat sadistic viewing pleasure:

Wyatt-Gunning says the brief for the campaign was simply to market a message that reflects their brand: That in spite of providing a somewhat commoditised service, theirs is still the best and gives customers what they really want: "fasterfast internet", supported by a very human bunch of 'WebAfricans' who are all very professional but encouraged to be themselves."

You may think 'skip it if you can' is a somewhat risky call to action, especially as Wyatt-Gunning says the norm is for almost all YouTube ads to try and get their message across within five seconds of panic before the viewer inevitably skips to the video they searched for. Worse, he says these are "Almost all rubbish and unmemorable." That's why they wanted their target market to experience the brand for longer than five seconds and understand that they are human, a little bit offbeat and able to laugh at themselves.

He says this ties in with WebAfrica's fibre internet service offering perfectly because they' found that, unlike ADSL – the old-school fixed-line internet access – fibre needs a human touch because it's all quite scary. "People want to understand why the pavement in their street is being dug up, what the difference between a network and a service provider is and how they would benefit from internet up to 100x faster than what they currently have." That's how WebAfrica defined 'fasterfast' and clearly this is what consumers wants as the the ad has been 'viewed' 250,000 times in 6 weeks.

Wyatt-Gunning says, "That might not sound like a lot compared with Ed Sheeran's latest song, but remember this:

- Nobody searches for 'WebAfrica Skip It advert'. They search for Rihanna or Penguins in the Arctic Circle, or whatever they want to, but they're forced to endure our ad for at least five seconds.
- To be classified as a YouTube 'view', the viewer needs to watch the ad for at least 30 seconds, long beyond the 5 seconds after which they can skip.
- Our audience for the ad is very limited. We only deliver it to South Africans who are viewing in areas where we already provide fibre internet, or soon will do."



Tim Wyatt-Gunning, CEO of WebAfrica.

So, while Wyatt-Gunning says "It's impossible to attribute sales solely to the YouTube ad because we take a holistic view to marketing in fibre-ready areas: shopping mall promos, billboards, street lamps, WebAfricans wearing sandwich-boards handing out flyers at traffic lights, local radio ads and more," together it seems to work since sales have sky-rocketed.

Ending with the question of whether he predicts we'll see more effort going into the ads typically scheduled for YouTube's '5 seconds before you can skip' pre-roll, Wyatt-Gunning says no as the 'long view' works for them, so to expect more, soon as the ad is just one element in a new series of work being produced for WebAfrica's next campaign by The Jupiter Drawing Room Cape Town.

[Click here](#) for more from Wyatt-Gunning, [here](#) for more about WebAfrica and [here](#) for the latest updates from the Jupiter Drawing Room's press office. You can also follow [WebAfrica](#) and the [Jupiter Drawing Room](#) on Twitter.

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