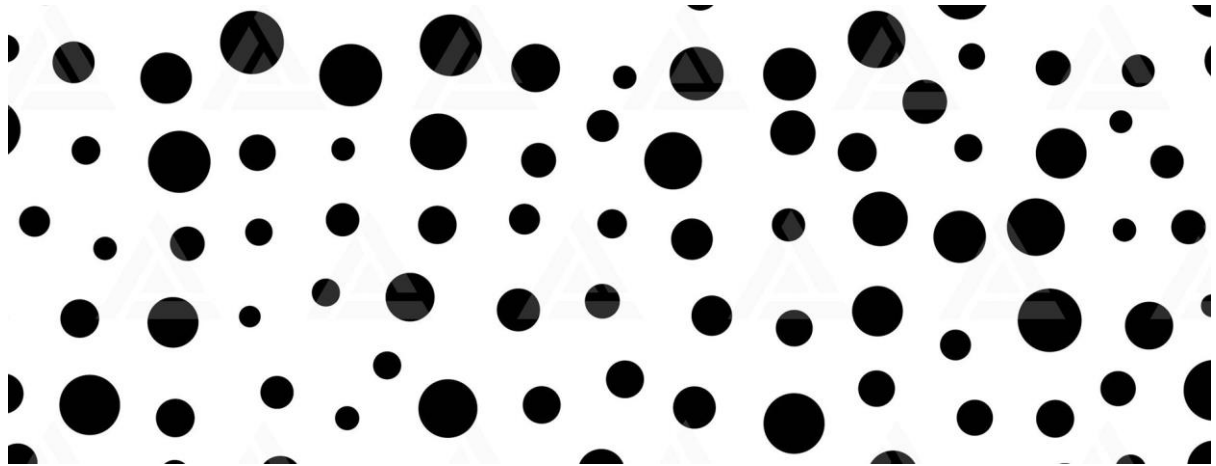


The Annoying Trend of YouTubers Ignoring Full Stops

Shôn Ellerton, January 16, 2024

For all you YouTubers out there. Please stop ignoring the full stop at the end of the sentence. It is there for a reason.



It's time we talk about punctuation for YouTubers and AI-generated speech, or rather, lack of punctuation. For programmers of AI-generated speech and for many of those YouTubers out there, let me introduce you to the full stop or period character. Indeed, at the end of every sentence, there is a little dot signifying a *pause* denoting the end of the sentence. It's not put there just for fun. There's a reason for having it there. To make one's speech or writings more intelligible, unless it's legal jargon, much of which many of us struggle to understand due to its cryptic use of punctuation.

Now let me just explain my beef with all of this. There's an amazing world out there of YouTube documentaries covering everything from the history of World War I to making complex animal shapes by folding little pieces of paper. For example, I found a great little kid's YouTube channel called Oversimplified on the subject of war history using simple animation making it more interesting for kids. My son enjoys watching it. However, the speed of the narrator was somewhat overwhelming, even to Ben Shapiro standards, and there was little if none at all in the way of pausing between sentences. The overall experience was just a non-stop monotonic rambling of words probably with the intention to keep the attention span going for a gnat.

Then there are the mundane and tiresome YouTubers my son frequently watches showing walkthroughs of such addictive games like Minecraft and Fortnite. Not only would my son, if allowed to, spend hours and hours playing these games

online, he would then watch YouTube videos of others playing these games. In each of these videos, there will be some dorky over-hyped teenager or early 20s-something complete with headphone and mic occupying a section of the screen babbling *non-stop* barfing up an endless monologue of utter diatribe while playing the game. No pause for reflection. Just endless babble.

What is it with this ridiculous trend of speaking without a quick pause at the end of a sentence? What happened to the ‘power of the pause’? If one watches any decent TV documentary, obvious examples being those with David Attenborough and Michael Palin or many others, the power of the pause is always evident and the way the speech is delivered makes it easy and clear to understand. Is it just a trendy thing that YouTubers, somehow, feel the need to skip out the punctuation and pause for the sake of making the YouTube video more hip? To save an extra few seconds to make the video shorter? The worst offenders are those listicle-type videos which might include such subjects like, *The Worst 25 Places in the World to Live*, or *Top 10 Most Dangerous Waterslides*. However, videos designed to relax you or those videos which narrate a book or story are always delivered with appropriate feeling and punctuation. Why can’t the others do the same?

Apart from audio books and wellness videos, not all YouTube video documentaries and tutorials are like this, of course. That would be overgeneralising. There are many commendable YouTube channels out there who use good narrators who can deliver with clarity, context, and feeling, allowing the listener to absorb the substance of the message. Some may be accused of being slow to deliver. For example, the philosopher, Sam Harris, someone I have followed from time to time, speaks very clearly but rather slowly. But that’s not a problem because we can speed up our videos on YouTube and most other video streaming platforms. However, when punctuation is ignored, changing the speed of the video will make no difference, even when slowing it down. It still sounds fragmented, rushed, and generally, horrible.

Speaking of fragmentation, there is another trite practice with YouTubers which I hate. Not only do many YouTubers ignore punctuation, they go so far as to edit the video to jump immediately to the next passage. It’s like watching lots of little glitches during the video, but with the intent to give the feeling that it’s all speedy like and engaging. Especially to appease our younger viewers who seem to need constant engagement on their screens.

As for AI-generated speech, this problem of delivering passages of speech without proper pausing between sentences is rampant. I've used various AI software to convert text to speech including MicMonster and Speechelo. They both have some very convincing voices but so many of them fail to deliver with the power of the pause. To overcome this, one can inject pauses to the speech by inserting short codes, but it is quite time consuming.

So, let this be my little bit of advice for the week for many of you YouTubers out there. Add more gravitas and professionalism to your videos by introducing those little pauses between sentences. Add more feeling to your speech by acting less robotic. And please, stop rushing it through. Most of what you say will simply go through one ear and out the other in this fashion. Respect the pause and stop ignoring full stops at the end of each sentence.