

# Jeff Elder on social media

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Tuesday, April 26, 2011

## YouTube stars the Gregory Brothers talk viral videos in Charlotte

At right, *The Gregory Brothers: Sarah, Evan, Michael and Andrew Gregory.*



What's it like to create the most viral video on the planet?

"It was like drinking coffee all the time," says Michael Gregory of the Gregory Brothers, who were

the biggest thing on YouTube in 2010 when their ubiquitous "Bed Invader Song" video was watched more than anything else. There have now been more than 79 million views of the video -- and that's just of the main version of the music video which "auto tunes the news" of a rape attempt with results that are somehow passionate, hilarious, poignant, soulful, and damn catchy. "It was amazing to watch it go viral, but we were also working a lot right at that time. So we had other stuff going on.

"It's the biggest thing we've done, but it's not the only thing we've done. Other videos we've done have millions of views. But, it's true, we wouldn't be here without it."

BED INTRUDER SONG!!! (now on iTunes)



0:00 / 2:08



### Jeff Elder

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Jeff Elder is a longtime Charlotte Observer columnist who studied social media on a Knight fellowship at Stanford University and ran social media for a Fortune 50 company. He now works for a social media startup in Silicon Valley.

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"Here" is on the Digitour of YouTube stars touring the country. Now about one-third of the way done, the tour started out west, came south, and now heads north. Michael said the largest house so far is about 600 people in L.A., but that a New York gig might be bigger. The Digitour plays the N.C. Music Factory tonight (4/26). Justin Ruckman, Matthew Tyndall and Desiree Kane of CLT Blog pulled together a press conference and streamed the live video this afternoon. See that [here](#). CLT Blog, the strongest and best independent new media voice in Charlotte, has pulled together many events like this in the past.

The idea of a tour of YouTube stars brings up a question: Do internet stars need to break through to mainstream media to make it in the big time?

"It's not crucial," says Evan Gregory, brother of band mates Michael and Andrew Gregory, and the wife of band member Sarah Fullen Gregory. "But mainstream media is still the measuring stick of how big you make it, and will be for some time. When we made it in The New York Times, people who wouldn't have taken us seriously began to."

The Gregory Brothers' breakthrough to mainstream media is taking them to TV -- they are making a pilot of a sitcom for Comedy Central. "We want it to be like "The Monkees" of the 21st century," says Andrew Gregory.

That big time in traditional media awaits, yet the story of this band and this tour is a one-person audience in front of a computer, clicking the "play" button on YouTube, and encountering a video in a very personal way.

"Yes, that personal connection is different," says Evan. "People make a choice to play our videos, and you can feel that in the crowds on the tour."

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