SOCIAL MEDIA
CLAIMS ITS PROVERBIAL SEAT ON THE COUCH

2012 MAY WELL go down in history the as year that TV went social. No, this doesn’t mean more people started holding Beverly Hills 90210 viewing parties with their friends, it means social media took its rightful seat on the couch next to TV viewers. It was the year the online live stream of the Super Bowl drew more than 2.1 million visitors, and fans broke the tweets per second (TPS) record for a sporting event with 12,233 TPS. It was the year that Grammy viewers took to Twitter in record numbers too—people sent 10,901 TPS as Adele won Record of the Year and the word “Grammys” was mentioned in more than five million Tweets on Grammy Sunday. And as the elections approach, TV networks are already preparing to capture and harness the power of “the second screen”—ABC has announced a collaboration with Bluefin Labs for coverage of key nights in the 2012 presidential campaign, and MTV is planning to launch “Fantasy Election 12,” an election game that will incorporate real-life actions by both candidates and players. A new day is dawning for both viewers and TV broadcasters, and by all accounts, it appears that the merging of social and TV is here to stay and claim a permanent seat in living rooms across the world.

VIEWERS HAVE led this revolution from one screen to three (TV, mobile device and personal computer). At this rate, the next evolution of humans will need four arms and hands to manage all of our data devices. Now we’re starting to see TV networks and advertisers capitalize on the cha-ching of all of these eyeballs that are glued to multiple screens at once. In addition to thinking of advertising as a multi-screen experience, there’s a whole new frontier of viewer engagement—and monetization—to explore: integration of social channels into TV broadcasts, the concept of syncing what viewers are watching on TV with what they’re doing online during that same time period, and integrating viewer comments shared via social networks into live broadcasts. These are just a few of the ways networks are harnessing the power of social TV. Along with increased viewer engagement across multiple platforms also comes tons of new consumer data both advertisers and networks can take advantage of in designing next generation viewer experiences.
IN ADDITION TO PROVIDING NEW OPPORTUNITIES

for viewer engagement and advertising, the rise of social TV is having another positive impact: it’s driving TV ratings. A study conducted by Neilsen looked at the correlation between online buzz and TV ratings and found that a 9% increase in buzz equated to a 1% increase in ratings. The effect of online buzz on a show’s ratings was strongest for the premier of new shows, weakening some as a show’s season progresses, but still remained significant. A TV Guide survey released in February 2012 correlates with these findings-- 71% of respondents of that survey said they have seen a social media impression about a TV show, while 17% have begun to watch a show because of a social impression. The message here is that viewers are talking about TV shows online and there is a definite advantage for TV show’s producers to encourage them to do so.

ANOTHER BENEFIT OF SOCIALIZING THE TV EXPERIENCE

is better metrics for advertisers. Neilsen ratings only get you so far, especially when so many viewers are recording shows and watching them later. Online buzz before, during, and after shows—allows networks to come up with truly measurable results that go well beyond Nielsen ratings. Brands are striving for measurable brand and revenue impact and that’s where digital channel can definitely deliver. Number of tweets, mentions, shares, conversations—these and other social media metrics can all be easily tracked and quantified in a way that ratings will struggle to compete with. Besides, Nielsen is clearly behind the times. They still have their “sample viewers” recording what they watch with something called paper and a pen. Do they think this is 1996? With all of the technology out there, you’d think they would have automated this process and have a device that actually monitors what is being watched, right? Instead, they’ve left the door wide open for online metrics to highlight inaccuracies in their data based on the number of online conversations versus recorded viewers.
OF COURSE, just as there are definite advantages to incorporating social elements into TV shows, there are downsides. Figuring out how to pull Tweets and Facebook comments into a show is tricky business—viewers don’t want to watch a screen filled with annoying, distracting text. We like to look to another screen for that. Viewers’ attention is already divided among their devices while watching TV; figuring out engaging, artful ways of incorporating comments or other social contributions without further detracting attention from shows is no easy feat. Also tough issue will be figuring out ways to monetize these new opportunities. There are a few challenges that networks will face in the quest to monetization including analyzing the flood of viewer data, designing sponsorship packages that incorporate multiple activation points, and developing innovative ways of engaging viewers who are already being barraged with content on multiple platforms. But there are already lots of great examples of networks and brands rising to the challenge.
MORE SCREENS, MORE ENGAGEMENT, MORE OPPORTUNITY.

WHEN TALKING about social TV, people talk about the three screens: TV, mobile device and computer. Right now, a lot of social integration takes place via the first screen, in a sort of social TV 1.0, if you will: tweets or texts displayed on the TV screen. This method is nothing new—VH1’s “Pop Up Video” was doing this in 1996. How many shows have you seen lately that include a hashtag across the top or bottom of the screen? That’s TV 1.0.

NIELSEN TALKS about “Generation C”—a new, connected generation who consume media, socialize, and share experiences through devices—and while they define this generation as age (18-34), surely this age group will continue to expand to encompass both older and younger viewers. The most recent U.S. Census shows 18- to 24-year-olds make up 23% of the population. Interestingly they also make up 23% of TV viewers. But when it comes to their online activities, they are far from average. They watch 27% of all online videos and they are 27% of all social networking site visitors. They also own 33% of the tablets and 39% of smartphones in the U.S. These are disproportionately high percentages when compared to other age groups, but really does that surprise you? Probably not. And beyond just Generation C, about 40% of smartphone and tablet users report using them while watching TV daily, according to a 2011 Nielsen survey. And while the predominant activity that simultaneous TV and smartphone/tablet users reported was checking email, 19% of them report searching for product information and 13% say they search for coupons or deals—an important statistic for both networks and brands to be aware of when they consider how to monetize the social channel.
**IN TERMS OF** monetization, more screens means more ways to advertise and more opportunities for cross-channel packages. A cool example is TBS’s bundled Facebook /TV/digital package. This TBS/Facebook partnership is the first of its kind. It involves branded comedy “shorts” developed by the digital-production company DumbDumb, no they didn’t name themselves after the famous lollipop. DumbDumb has worked directly with brands like Denny’s, for which it produced a series featuring “Saturday Night Live” alum Dave Koechner interviewing celebrities in a Denny’s booth.

**FOR THE** TBS/Facebook deal, DumbDumb will produce a bunch of video shorts featuring famous actors. The shorts will be distributed on TBS’s various sites, YouTube channels, Facebook pages and Twitter feeds. In the package that TBS has been presenting to advertisers, brands can then choose to promote the video shorts through TV spots showing a teaser version of the video on popular comedy shows, through digital buys across Turner digital properties, and also on Facebook, likely through sponsored stories.
SOCIAL TV VIEWERS
GET GLUED TO THE TUBE

ANOTHER WAY brands are banking on TV audience’s multi-screen tendencies is through second-screen apps like Social Toaster, Get Glue, Into Now, Shazam and Viggle. Get Glue lets viewers check in to shows they’re watching to find others watching the same shows, see what friends are watching, and get rewards like stickers and discounts. In case you were wonder, these new social viewers also have no shame. They’ll openly tell their friends exactly how long they’ve been vegged out in front of their TV. Fox recently partnered with Get Glue and Twitter to promote “Fringe”—a campaign being hailed as so successful with fans that it saved the show from being cancelled. While the show has only moderate Nielsen ratings, it is a big hit among Get Glue users as a result of the campaign. Showtime is another network that has had success with Get Glue by offering users who check in while watching shows the chance to win stickers and DVDs. Into Now has teamed up with ABC and sponsor Lexus to promote “Revenge” with a second-screen sweepstakes that will allow one lucky fan to win a week’s stay in the Hamptons. Unilever partnered with Viggle as part of their March Madness campaign for Dove Men+Care, offering users bonus Viggle points for viewers who watch branded videos or ads. Social-Toaster will be used to drive fan advocacy and engagement for a Kraft sponsorship with The Balancing Act on Lifetime. This program will have contests geared around audience participation and fan recruitment all channeled through social media using our platform.

WITH SO MANY social interactions around TV happening, how will networks and brands know where to focus future efforts and tap into the conversations happening around TV shows? That’s where new social TV analytic tools come in. SocialGuide, Trendrr, Bluefin Labs and Networked Insights are the big players in that space, offering various capabilities from monitoring conversations about shows to drilling down on individual fans to find influencers to which commercials are people talking about on social media sites, and more.
FASHION STAR
SHORTENS THE RUNWAY
FOR DIRECT SALES

Fashion Star is a unique new reality show that has integrated fashion retail into the show itself and used social media including Pinterest to drive online engagement about the items that were being sold. Contestants compete with each other to create clothes and have them purchased by a buyer from one of three stores: Macy’s, Saks Fifth Avenue, and H&M. Designs are judged by celebs Jessica Simpson, Nicole Richie, and John Varvatos. At the end of the season, the winner is named “Fashion Star” and receives a multimillion dollar collection within each store. Last season Kara Laricks took home the prize, despite selecting a strange version of a female Mohawk as her hairstyle of choice.

EACH WEEK, the winning pieces selected by buyers are available online and in stores the same night the show airs. Despite sluggish ratings during its first season, the show was considered to be a success on at least one front: generating sales directly from the show. “Sales of ‘Fashion Star’ merchandise exceeded expectations,” Macy’s spokesperson Holly Thomas said in an interview with TV Guide. According to executive producer Ben Silverman, the click-through rate on purchases was “hundreds of percentage points higher than normal.”

FASHION STAR is a great example of direct from show sales, buzz, and integrated campaigns across multiple platforms, including Pinterest, which is especially well-suited to the show’s content.

**OPRAH LIFECLASS** is currently in its second season and features various motivational speakers and guests who aim to help viewers overcome challenges. The show is being hailed as breaking new ground in terms of social media integration. Oprah is incorporating social media and interactivity into every episode across various platforms, from Facebook and Twitter to Skype and Instagram.

**DURING EACH EPISODE,** Oprah is positioned in front of multiple TV screens displaying tweets. Backstage is a room where fans can be Skyped in to the live show to interact with Oprah.

**SOCIAL MEDIA** is really the lifeblood of the show—in addition to the format of the show centering around real-time engagement with viewers, the show does things like incorporating Facebook polls into the show giving real-time results, displaying tweets and responding to them on the show, and rewarding viewers for tuning in online by giving them a behind-the-scenes look at what happens during commercial breaks. While TV viewers watch commercials, the camera keeps rolling, and only those watching online get to see that footage. The show’s online site is also a community where they can post comments and interact with others watching the show.

The Oprah team reported to Mashable in April that during one week alone there were 414,780 mentions on Facebook and 3,026 answers posted to the Lifeclass wall on Oprah.com, along with over 29,000 views to the wall. The web cast brought in nearly 2.6 million viewer minutes from 149 countries. Oprah had to do something to attract viewers to OWN which initially looked like the Ishtar of movie networks.

You can watch season one of Oprah’s Lifeclass here: http://www.oprah.com/oprahs-lifeclass/Oprahs-Lifeclass-Lessons-Season-1

AMERICAN IDOL AND THE VOICE
HIT A SOCIAL HIGH NOTE

If there’s a genre of TV show ideally suited to social, it’s reality singing competitions. It’s no surprise, then, that beyond the singing competitions on each show, there’s another competition both shows are involved in: the race to be recognized as leader in the social TV space. Where once Neilsen ratings were the gold standard of a show’s success, now the number both networks and advertisers are focused on is online buzz before, during and after a show. Evidence of this shift can be seen in the coverage of the American Idol season 11 finale. Rather than making headlines for lackluster ratings, the episode garnered such headlines as “American Idol’ Sets Four Social TV Records.” While the episode’s viewership numbers were down 27% compared to last year’s season finale, the viewers of the show generated 1.2 million comments across social media sites during the two-hour finale, making it the most talked about season finale ever, according to data from Bluefin Labs. The season finale also led to a victory over a season-long rivalry with The Voice for number of comments generated—the final tally for American Idol was 5.9 million comments, while the Voice trailed with 2.7 million.

American Idol has gone from audience engagement 1.0—viewers voting by phone or text—to allowing viewers to vote via Facebook. In addition to just voting, American Idol also incorporated several innovative second-screen technologies into season 11. American Idol partnered with Shazam, a mobile device based music identification service, to make the show “Shazamable.” Viewers are able to tag the shows with the Shazam app to identify what songs the contestants are performing, buy the songs, follow the show’s official social media channels, and see video and photos from AmericanIdol.com. Shazam also holds the potential to become another advertising platform for the show especially since they have incorporated QR code-like technology that allows a viewer to Shazam segments of the show to be taken to a designated web page.

Use Shazam with American Idol for the season finale tonight 8/7c on Fox

SPONSORS OF season 11 of American Idol explored new promotion vehicles (no pun intended), with Ford as the official automotive sponsor providing unique and exclusive content centered around the show. Ford vehicles and show finalists were featured each week in Ford music videos, which aired both on TV and online on the American Idol site. Ford also awarded a new car to both the runner-up and Season 11 winner. Sponsors Coca-Cola and Kraft both riffed on a viewing party concept—after all, in-person socializing is just as social (ok, more social) than online socializing—with Coca-Cola’s Family Night program on MyCokeRewards.com which offered activities and recipes to encourage families to “make tonight a family night” and Kraft’s Viewing Party Planner, also featuring recipes and entertainment ideas.

AMERICAN IDOL has also begun testing second-screen advertising. During the season finale, they partnered with Second Screen Networks, a new company that will create a network of second screen advertisements that appear while TV commercials air. Second Screen Networks works through an automated content recognition platform that identifies what show a viewer is watching then matches the spot and the user to a digital ad that runs at the same time. During the AmericaIdol finale, the Idol fan site AmericanIdolNet.com featured poll-style ads that asked viewers questions about the commercials that were being aired—in one instance, asking viewers whether the Ford commercial on their TV screen was convincing enough to get them to buy a car. While the ads that ran during the Idol finale were unpaid prototypes, this concept definitely shows promise in terms of both data and revenue potential.

ALTHOUGH American Idol won the spring 2012 season in terms of number of comments generated, The Voice is no slouch when it comes to integrating social media into the show. Far from it, in fact—the show is widely hailed as being the “gold standard” for TV/social integration. The show features a “social media correspondent” tasked with bridging the gap between the TV experience of the show with the online experience. The Voice’s season two social media correspondent, Christina Milian, hung out in the “Social Media Lounge”—sponsored by Sprint—where she interviewed contestants, Tweeted, and fielded questions from viewers which they submitted via Twitter. The technique of having an official social media correspondent is hit or miss, as evidenced by the show swapping out the original person who filled the role with Christina Milian during the second season. Wetpaint.com did a poll that asked “What did you think of Christina Milian as The Voice’s social media correspondent?”—almost half of those who took the poll answered “Totally unnecessary and annoying!”
**IN ADDITION** to the social media correspondent, *The Voice* incorporated a number of other social media activation points including contestant profiles on Facebook and Twitter, weekly live-tweets with coaches, live streaming post-show, Instagram and Pinterest boards.

*The Voice* also integrated two interactive online fan games—*The Loudest Voice* and *The 5th Coach Game*.

*The Loudest Voice* was sponsored by Sprint and involved weekly tasks for fans to complete in order to win an exclusive online badge and placement on the site’s leaderboard. For the other game, *The Voice* partnered with Invoke Media to create a Facebook app, also sponsored by Sprint, that allowed fans to engage with the show in a unique way. The app, *The 5th Coach Game*, enabled fans to form their own teams—like fantasy football. The game simulated the celebrity coaches’ on-show experience by allowing fans to select a team of 12 artists and predict winners for each round. During the show’s live episodes, artists from each of four celebrity coach’s teams perform and fans playing the game choose who they think will continue on, earning points for each correct choice. The game included a multitude of chances for players to win prizes in weekly drawings in addition to a final sweepstakes contest with a grand prize for a trip for two to Los Angeles to meet the winner of season two of “The Voice.”
REVENGE IS SWEET
WITH INTO NOW

THE PROMOTION required viewers to actually be tuned into the show—the Into Now app works via audio recognition technology and provided viewers with trivia quizzes and access to special content produced for the app. Users were entered into a sweepstakes to win a week-long vacation in the Hamptons so viewers can picture Victoria’s disapproving glare off her Grayson Manor balcony as they try to fit into high society. The app also allowed viewers to spot Facebook friends who were also tuned into the show, and pulled in Twitter feeds including those from actors and producers. This real-time viewing experience was a way to encourage live viewing of the show, as the rapid growth of DVR video on demand use has resulted in networks having a harder time measuring viewership.

THE SHOW’S social media presences were factored into a multimedia sponsorship deal with Lexus. In addition to commercials during the show and on various ABC and Revenge websites, the package also included a Facebook app, premier placement on ABC.com’s “Discuss” pages which feature Facebook and Twitter feeds about the show, and in-show product placement.

WHILE THE SHOW enjoyed decent but not spectacular ratings, the show’s strong social media following and resulting online buzz may well have factored into ABC’s decision to move the show to the coveted Sunday night at 9 pm slot for fall 2012.
ESPN PUTS its GameFace On
Thanks to the incredible volume of sports-related tweets that coincide with almost every major sporting event, Twitter has grown increasingly interested in monetizing these interactions. A good example of one such partnership was ESPN and Twitter’s “#GameFace” promotion during the NBA Finals. The goal of the campaign was to get fans to tweet photos of their best “game face.” At the conclusion of each game, NBA Tonight analysts will highlight the competition and reveal the winning photos on-air. The winning photos will also be featured in a photo gallery online.

THE CAMPAIGN was promoted across Twitter via their Promoted Products suite (including a Promoted Trend during the finals) as well as via @NBAonESPN’s Twitter handle, and at the conclusion of the NBA Finals, ESPN basketball analyst Jalen Rose tweeted his top five favorite #GameFace entries before revealing the final winner, who will received a grand tour of ESPN headquarters in Bristol, Connecticut. In addition to promotion across Twitter, the campaign will be publicized throughout ESPN’s TV networks, and ABC and ESPN’s vast array of web and mobile assets.

THIS PARTNERSHIP represents a unique way for advertisers to engage audiences around ESPN’s premier content across all three screens in a coordinated way. It also will undoubtedly help Twitter in their quest to identify meaningful and successful revenue streams, as well as attract sponsors who understand the opportunity and value multi-screen campaigns entail. Additional marquee sports events are already slotted to run similar campaigns in the future.
“WE WANTED” to create a way for sponsors to benefit from the social following we were generating. When SME Digital brought SocialToaster as one way we could deliver meaningful metrics back to our sponsors, we couldn’t deny that being able to show an average share rate of over 70% for our content would make a difference. We are excited about this program and look forward to showing success for Kraft.” Jamie Kennedy, Social Media Director, The Balancing Act.

**LIFETIME’S** The Balancing Act, a morning talk show geared towards women is taking branded social entertainment to a whole new level. They partnered with SocialToaster and SME Digital to produce sponsored entertainment packages for their advertisers. The goal is to create an organic way for paid sponsors to participate in the social channel. The pilot program will air in August with Kraft, one of their premier sponsors. The Balancing Act will build their audience of Super Fans through SocialToaster and create a built-in distribution channel for their content while providing meaningful data back to sponsor participants on influencers, reach and conversions. Viewers will be rewarded for recruiting new super fans, generating content sharing from their network and driving the most traffic to the Balancing Act website. As part of the campaign viewers will be given the opportunity to participate in special contests driven through the social channel that integrate Kraft’s products to win exclusive prizes. One lucky winner will even get to participate in a cooking segment on the show!

**THE BALANCING ACT GOES FULL THROTTLE**

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WHAT WILL TV look like in the future? Will our attention still be divided between the big screen and our smaller ones, or will it all eventually evolve back to one channel where we’ll watch shows, interact and consume advertising? Of course, we can’t predict the future—we’re good but not that good!—but here are a few trends we’re seeing with regard to the evolution of TV:

- Online TV models might replace traditional TV. This is already starting to happen, as witnessed by YouTube’s recent announcement of a new TV initiative that would add premium channels with content from Hollywood providers. Hulu has also announced they’ll be adding more original shows. Ask around to see how many of your friends have abandoned their cable service in favor of onDemand TV watching online.

- Netflix may become a cable channel. Netflix CEO Reed Hastings’ revealed that in the future we may see Netflix included as part of a bundled cable package, with 40 percent original content and 60 percent coming from other sources. They are still desperately trying to recover from their price hike mishap. It appears they may abandon the online model too.

- Audience interaction will shape content. As we’ve already discussed at length here, audiences are not content to just passively watch TV anymore. They want to interact with each other and with the characters they’re watching on TV. Audiences pick the winners in online singing competitions—what about picking the ending to a show or a season finale?

- Shows will find ways to drive the after conversation. Most shows we’ve discussed are examples of using social to drive and almost force live TV watching. Networks will have to come to terms with the fact that many of their viewers are too busy to watch the live show, but still want the opportunity to engage in the social conversation. This will require creativity around campaigns so that they remain relevant even during onDemand viewing.
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