

Overview & Details

A [news report from Reuters](#) about the TV coverage of the Republican National Convention in the US this week will have raised a few marketers' eyebrows. Not because it showed that viewing figures were down to 20 million (the figures have been on the slide for a decade, apart from when Sarah Palin took the stage). No, the reason they will have been interested is that despite waning interest in viewing political debate on TV, thousands of people visited social media sites to follow the convention live across Facebook, Twitter, Google+ and YouTube.

Topics such as #GOP2012, #RNC and #Romney were high-trending on Twitter, alongside hashtags for Hurricane Isaac. Those using social media whilst watching along, commenting on the red dress worn by Ann Romney (Oscar de la Renta in case you were wondering), are part of a growing trend of 'second screen socializers'. Social TV heralds a new era of TV advertising where interruption and disruption is replaced by relevance and added value.

Social TV is any technology that supports communication and social interaction around TV content. There are many technologies being developed to make TV more social (see page 2), but they all make watching TV a more social experience, creating a global water-cooler.

Implications

There are three main categories of second screen services:

- **Discuss:** Apps and services that try to facilitate debate around shows. This covers everyone from Twitter to Zeebox.
- **Discover:** Apps and services that help people to find content to view, usually through peer recommendation, such as GetGlue and Showyou
- **Deepen:** Apps and services that provide the viewer with deeper content. Can be explicit rewards from advertisers (e.g. Viggle), or related program material

Each service is attracting users who are highly engaged with the content and who are freely sharing their likes and dislikes – as well as a lot of data about themselves. The services also provide an interesting way to extend a brand message, using the emotive power and lean back nature of TV to draw the viewer into a more engaging and in depth conversation in the lean forward world of digital. Furthermore this data can help inform media plans by identifying: TV programs with a high social bounce; the audience make-up and the effectiveness of the creative itself.

Summary

We now *know* what people think about TV shows, we don't have to extrapolate from focus groups, and likewise we know how they feel about brands and their advertising. We're wired as humans to share with one another and if you've ever used a Social TV, it's likely you will have enjoyed the different experience it added to your viewing. Some key points to consider are that connected viewers are currently more important than connected TVs - its second screens that are driving engagement. Whilst first screen interactivity can be relatively expensive and controlled by pay cable / satellite operators, the second screen is platform agnostic and can have a low barrier to entry for brands. Finally also consider that companion content on the second screen (rather than the first) goes with the grain of natural viewing behavior, not against it – we lean into the second screen and back from the first.

Social TV services:

Zeebox: A UK based social networking and social television service for mobile devices providing contextual information as people watch TV - such as which friends are watching the same shows right now and providing augmented information on what is seen and heard within the broadcast.

GetGlue: Users check-in and share what they are watching, listening to and reading with friends; get fresh recommendations and get discounts and other rewards from their favorite shows and movies. As of Jan 2012, GetGlue has 2M users that checked-in over 100M times in 2011. 75 major networks and 10 movie studios use GetGlue to promote their shows and movies to fans.

Miso TV: Users check-in to television shows to earn points and badges. Users can then comment on episodes of shows and 'like' posts by other users. Also, users can rate shows to let others know how much they liked or disliked a particular episode as well as mark which shows are their favorite. Most recently, Miso launched "Sideshows," allowing fans and networks alike to create supplementary second-screen content around any show.

Viggle: Loyalty App that allows users to check-in to TV shows and receive points to exchange for real world rewards such as movie tickets.

IntoNow: Owned by Yahoo, IntoNow gives users the ability to almost instantly recognize TV content through the audio output and then helps them share and discuss those shows with friends, both within the service and through social networks.

Showyou: An App that works across iPhone, iPad and in-browser that allows the user to collate the videos they want to watch from across the web, storing them for viewing at a later date. It also taps into Twitter and Facebook for recommendations and sharing

Klip: A video sharing App that allows you take videos on your phone, upload to the app and then share with others through the app and social networks.

Measurement services:

Bluefin labs: Measures how many people are talking about TV shows in social networks. Using social media to discover and understand audience engagement around television offers advertisers more insight into the audience they are reaching, which is not possible through the broadcaster. Typical questions to answer include: *'When I run an ad in a certain show or on a certain network, what is the nature of the audience that's tuning in? Who am I reaching?'* or *'Is my advertising having an impact on how consumers talk and think about my brand?'*

Trendrr: Allows brands to identify volume, sentiment, location, demographics and influencers around their products and brand, as well as how far and how fast brand content is being passed around social channels. Brands can look at competitive data and track against sales and marketing campaigns with historical views. The service's data tracking covers blogs, microblogs, news aggregators, social networks, commerce, and video sites.