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IS SOCIAL MEDIA KILLING TV?

If Anything, Facebook, Twitter and Other Mobile Startups Have Brought Back Appointment Viewing

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Social media isn't killing anything, least of all TV.

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In fact, after years of declines in live tune-in, Twitter, Facebook and some mobile startups appear to be luring audiences back to appointment TV. While DVRs unglued us from TV schedules, the desire to tap into the tweets, posts and check-ins in real time may just bring us back.

"If you look at the tweets about a TV show, a huge proportion come from when the show is airing live, not an hour later," said Robin Sloan, who works with Twitter's media-partnership team. During awards shows such as the Oscars and Grammys, Twitter has seen viewers complain that those events aren't aired live on both coasts. To appease U.S. fans forced to swear off the internet for a month to save from British tweeters' "Doct Who" spoilers, the BBC decided to air the show on both continents on the same day.

TOP FIVE Most-watched broadcast shows in:

Prime time*

RANK SHOW

1	AMERICAN IDOL, WEDNESDAY
2	DANCING WITH THE STARS
3	AMERICAN IDOL, THURSDAY
4	NCAA BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS
5	NCIS

Social media†

RANK SHOW

1	"AMERICAN IDOL"
2	"GLEE"
3	"DANCING WITH THE STARS"
4	"FAMILY GUY"
5	"BLUE BLOODS"

*Nielsen total live and same-day DVR viewership of people two-years and older for the week of April 4-10 for broadcast, primetime programs. Source: Nielsen

†Trendrr.TV determines scores on Twitter mentions, public Facebook posts, Miso and GetGlue check-ins during the entire week of April 4-10 for broadcast programs. Source: Trendrr.TV

The most-viewed TV event in history, this year's Super Bowl XLV, also broke a record on Twitter, too. At more than 4,000 tweets per second during the final moments of the game, it had the highest volume of tweets for any sports event.

What's the allure exactly? The peanut gallery. When "Seinfeld" was the show du jour, we'd snicker in the office the next day about puffy shirts or Bubble Boy. Now, with phones and laptops snuggled up next to viewers on the couch, chatter about "American Idol" and Rachel Berry doesn't have to wait until the morning.

A whopping 86% of U.S. mobile internet users watch TV with their mobile devices, according to a Nielsen and Yahoo study published in January. Of that set, 40% say they are using the devices for social networking, 33% are using apps and more than half are texting friends and family. On the wired web with PCs and laptops, 60% of Nielsen panelists reported they simultaneously watched TV and surfed the internet at least once in March.

But chatter doesn't always translate to ratings. Digital agency Wiredset recently launched social-media tracker Trendrr.TV to rank TV shows based on full-week volume of tweets, Facebook posts and check-ins for GetGlue and Miso, two mobile startups that aim to corral TV chatter. On that chart, for the same week, "Idol" and "Dancing with the Stars" are top-three social-media shows; they also top Nielsen's list for most viewers. However, "Glee," while No. 2 on Trendrr.TV, was No. 77 on Nielsen's top-watched broadcast prime-time list for the same week.

While the need to tweet may boost appeal for live programming, is it stealing eyes from commercials as folks tweet during spots? Not if those advertisers pull in Twitter, too. During its Super Bowl spot, Audi used the

hashtag #ProgressIs and, at air time, mentions spiked to levels comparable to when Audi paid to promote the hashtag on Twitter itself.

Other marketers are partnering with networks to be on other screens when viewers' eyes stray from the TV. "We're observing and planning for consumers engaging with multiple screens concurrently so when they watch our content on TV, they are simultaneously going to our website and engaging on other devices," said Scott Kelly, head of digital marketing at Ford. To bring more viewers to those ads, networks are also turning to Twitter and its cohorts to boost viewership. In early April, for example, CBS launched TweetWeek, a week of TV stars from shows such as "Survivor" and "NCIS" tweeting during the live broadcasts of their shows and answering viewer questions.

"It's the difference between 42 minutes of exposure vs. 24/7 exposure," said Jesse Redniss, VP-digital at US Networks, which has a Chatter page for shows such as "Psych" and "Burn Notice" to collect web comments and tweets from stars and fans. When Comedy Central aired its roast of Donald Trump with the hashtag #TrumpRoast, the cable network saw its highest-rated Tuesday night ever.

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