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MC 3360 001

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6 November 2013

Assignment #2: In-Depth Interviews

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I. Background

Video on demand services have changed the way people view television. No longer are people required to sit in front of a screen at a designated time to watch their favorite programs. Video on demand services, commonly referred by the acronym V.O.D., have given new meaning to the ways of television and film delivery. With several services at people's fingertips, a sense of immediacy has changed mass communication. Terms like "binge-watching" and "streaming" are starting to become more common.

The topic of video on demand is important to the television industry. Due to the popularity of services like Amazon Prime Instant Video, Hulu, Youtube, and Netflix, the need to pull in high ratings for a program is all the more important. The world of mass communication has changed due to the increased use of these services. Less people are tuning in to linear TV (where viewers have to tune in to a specific scheduled time to watch). New strategic marketing plans and public relations campaigns have to be constantly refined to see what viewers think of a certain TV program. The television industry is having to be retooled to cater more to consumers.

The research will focus on how video on demand services are affecting TV ratings. The research will be done in an effort to see what new trends and strategies are arising in television and film industry due to video on demand.

II. Research Problem Definition

With video on demand services in high use, the problem to focus on is how these services are being used and affecting television ratings. They may be changing

them for better or for worse. A focus will be put on how these services are changing the viewing habits of everyday people. How advertisers and TV broadcasters are responding to this growing trend.

III. Research Problem Objectives

Several objectives are considered in this research. In terms of TV renewals, how are video on demand services affecting, for better or worse, television shows. Interview questions will be asked to see how people are forming habits around VOD services. How people are responding to TV shows being released to video on demand services before premiering on traditional live viewing TV. What public relation and marketing plans are advertisers and TV executives planning in response to the decline in live TV ratings? What are TV networks are doing to keep up with the popularity of video on demand?

IV. Research Questions

Due to the rise in use of video on demand services and how they affect TV and film ratings/viewership, these questions remain:

RQ1: Do TV networks and executives have specific marketing plans catered to V.O.D. platforms?

RQ2: What correlations and recurring habits do consumers who use video on demand have?

RQ3: Is second-screening a common practice while watching TV? What devices/programs does the consumer use?

V. Research Design

a. The research design to be used is exploratory research. The research will focus on gaining insight into video on demand viewership. Exploratory research will work because it focuses on getting ideas and insight from research. Some of the research will be to see how video on demand services are being utilized.

b. The method of research used was qualitative research. Qualitative research was a good fit for the topic of video on demand and ratings. It allowed a lot of probing with the in-depth interviews. This was good because the goal was to look for trends, rather than numbers, in video on demand services in relation to TV ratings.

c. The research technique used to carry out the research was in-depth interviews. Several in-depth interviews were conducted to see how real consumers are using video on demand services. The interviews were conducted with four respondents from different demographics. Interviews were able to yield insights into how respondents thought of video on demand services. The interviews allowed for a lot of probing into the effect of video on demand services on consumers and how their use patterns may affect TV ratings.

d. The type of data collected was primary data.

VI. Data Collection

a. The first few questions were asked to see what the respondent knew about video on demand services: Did they use the services? What words did they associate with the services? The next set of questions asked

what kind of services they had and how often they were used: How many days a week were the services used? What kinds of services did they use? Did they ever "binge-watch" on a program? The last set of questions aimed to see the respondents' habits: Did they second-screen during TV viewing? Did they like the tailored ads offered to them through video on demand services?

b. The sample size in the research consisted of four respondents. Two working professionals and two undergraduates made up the sample size of respondents.

Of the two working professionals selected, one was a college professor with an extensive background in media and the other worked in a non-media occupation. For the two undergraduates, one was a junior classification and the other was a senior classification.

- o Jon Zmikly (SJMC Senior Lecturer): jz18@txstate.edu
  - Monday, November 4, 2013 at 5:30 pm during his office hours.
- o Madelyn Osborne (Occupational Therapist): 30106 Canyon Summer Lane Spring, TX
  - Friday, October 25, 2013 at 2pm. in respondent's house.
- o Peter Padilla (undergraduate senior): 1250 Sadler Drive 1723 San Marcos, TX 78666
  - Tuesday, November 5, 2013 at 10 p.m. in respondent's house.

- Allie Horton (undergraduate junior): 1250 Sadler Drive 222 San Marcos, TX 78666

    - Monday, November 4, 2013 at Texas State University building Old Main 230.

c. I used a written journal and voice recorder as instruments for this research. The journal was used to take notes and record observations during the interviews.

VII.   Analysis and Results

One of the first questions to start off the interviews was the words that the respondents imagined when they thought of video on demand services like Netflix, Hulu, and/or Amazon. All of them mentioned convience and variety as words and images they thought of. One interview mentioned the reason he used the services was that unlike traditional TV that was stationary, video on demand services were "just a click away."

When asked about why they did not watch traditional scheduled programming, all of the respondents got frustration faces and went on to list many reasons. The complaints varied with things like too long of advertisement breaks, irrelevant advertisements, and too busy of schedules. All respondents admitted to second-screening, specifically using the Twitter application on their cell phones, while watching TV programs. This is something to take note of. If all the respondents used Twitter while program watching, maybe TV ad campaigns should incorporate Twitter use more.

In September 2013, Nielsen launched a Twitter TV Ratings system. The system aims to see how Twitter influences TV Ratings. From the interviews gathered, this system seemed to be opposite. Twitter may not have an effect on TV ratings but TV ratings may have an effect on Twitter use.

Nielsen's C3 Ratings, which include viewings three days after a program's original broadcast, seem to be an ineffective way of gathering ratings. All of the respondents mentioned that they frequently did not view a program until several days or even a week after the original broadcast. An implementation of a C7 Ratings system, which would include viewings seven days after the original broadcast, could possibly yield more accurate rating numbers.

TV network, CBS, began for the first time in September 2013 counting video on demand viewership. The ratings gathered will be included in the live TV ratings that they the company uses when selling to advertisers for commercial time.

Three of the four respondents from the interviews admitted to "binge-watching" on at least one TV program. Video on demand services easy access that let's consumers binge-watch on programs may be a good thing. In September 2013 at the Primetime Emmy Award, AMC's *Breaking Bad* creator Vince Gilligan credited video on demand service *Netflix* with saving his show, which has a serial episodic format.

From the insight gathered with the interviews, it seems some consumers like the convenience of video on demand services and want to see more growth of them. One thing noted was how advertisers are still trying to understand the scope of the consumer video on demand habits to create more effective ads.

VIII. Bibliography

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IX.   Appendix

All of the questions were kept brief and open in an effort to yield insightful responses from the interviews. Whenever the respondent gave an answer, a question from their response was asked to allow for more probing. Questions about their favorite shows were done to see what they enjoy about TV programs.

Interviews were planned to take place at certain times. All the interviews were done during the week when TV programs were currently airing. Respondents were asked about their interests to see how advertisers are using the new tool of tailored ads to keep people from tuning out.

Note taking was kept to a minimum during the interview in an effort to keep the respondent from feeling pressured to say or not say certain things. Interviews were more conversational with a voice recorder picking up the respondent's comments.