

Social TV Is All About The Big Game

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TV viewers turn to social media to discuss programming, commercials

Socializing the television experience is an attractive proposition for content owners and marketers alike—as well as for many viewers who enjoy discussing their favorite shows online, either before, during or after watching.

And the trend, helped largely by smartphone- and tablet-driven multitasking, is growing: Social TV analytics company trendrr reported that the number of social conversations about TV on several leading social sites rose from just over 10 million in June 2011 to over 81 million by June 2012.

Many of those conversations revolve around events that virtually require live viewing. Social TV analytics firm Bluefin Labs reported that in the first half of this year, major sporting events accounted for seven of the 10 most-talked-about TV programs online, with awards shows taking the remaining three spots.

For traditional content producers hoping a social element will encourage more live viewing of regular TV shows and less timeshifting—and along with it, more ad-watching—this may be a source of frustration. Of course, it doesn't mean that no one is socializing around everyday programming, just that the engagement around popular weekly series is drowned out by blockbuster broadcasting events.

And TV-related socializing isn't just about the show or the game. It also includes discussions about commercials. On Facebook and Twitter, in the first half of the year, tens of thousands of conversations took place about the brands with the most-discussed commercials, with women significantly more likely than men to discuss several of the leading companies.

While strategies around using social conversations to boost TV viewing and raise ad prices are new and unproven, it is clear that social TV, in all its iterations, is a business that the networks, social media companies and marketers are taking a lot more seriously.

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