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Advertising Week, Contributor
Editor

Digital Video is Killing TV? Six Reasons That's Crazy Talk

09/24/2016 09:01 pm ET | Updated Dec 06, 2017



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It's no secret that video has become pretty much a default go-to element for consumer campaigns. Brands that as recently as a few years ago would never have dreamt of producing high-quality 15- and 30-second spots are now running ads on video sites and integrating mini-movies into their social streams and direct marketing pitches.

It's obvious why. Because of its high engagement and consumers' natural attraction to sight, sound and motion, video will always be a great choice for entertaining, engaging and creating a strong brand experience. And the targeting capabilities of digital video platforms make it simple and cost-efficient for advertisers and their agencies to get these messages in front of the right people at the right time. (That is, when a digital video ad isn't being served by or to a botnet, but that's a discussion for another day.)

The programmatic buying revolution is reaching TV, prompting consumer marketers who have mostly focused on digital tactics to consider TV. It used to be that TV dollars moved to digital because of its targeting sophistication. Now things are moving the other way, with many marketers looking to extending the reach of digital campaigns on the world's greatest and most effective mass medium.

But many initially hesitate. Isn't TV slow, old, dying...? The insanely fast ascendance of digital targeting also brings the implied critique that traditional TV is an old medium that's losing effectiveness, audience and its sheer pride of place in the consumer marketing mix.

In fact, that couldn't be further from the truth. Here are six myths you may have heard about the state of TV in 2016, and why every single one of them is dead wrong:

1. "TV ads doesn't generate sales or activity"

Whether your goal is to sell cars or refinance homes, TV delivers more sales lift than any other ad-supported medium. 2015 research from [MarketShare](#) found that TV advertising generates more lift than digital or offline media at similar spending levels.

2. "TV advertising has lost its effectiveness"

The same MarketShare survey proved that [TV ads are just as effective as they were five years ago](#). In that same time, sales lift from digital advertising fell by 10%. Maybe that's because ad clutter isn't worsening on TV. On mobile phones? Not so much.

3. "Millennials don't watch TV"

It's true they clock fewer hours in front of the TV than the US's more seasoned citizens, but millennials still devote plenty of time to the tube. According to a [Q4 2015 Nielsen study](#), the average 18-to-34 old spends more than four hours engaging with TV daily.

4. "Well, millenials don't watch live TV"

Want to bet? Nielsen researchers found that millennials take in [an average of 2 hours and 45 minutes of live TV](#) a day. That's enough time to watch seven 22-minute episodes of The Big Bang Theory - every day.

5. "Nobody else watches live TV any more, either"

Not even close. Nearly 90% of TV is still watched live. Nielsen's [Q1 2016 Total Audience Measurement](#) report found that Americans watch about 35 ½ hours of TV each week. Less than four hours of that is time-shifted.

6. “Most TV Shows are saved to watch later”

It depends what you're watching. TiVo Research's [“State of TV Report: Q4 2015”](#) shows wide variation between which programs and networks are most- and least-time shifted. When live ad viewing is crucial to their goals, media buyers can favor programming like sports and syndicated shows that are more likely to be watched live.

TV advertising isn't dead. It's more accurate to say that programmatic platforms are bringing the TV and Digital worlds together in new complementary ways. Advertisers are now able to do what consumers have been already doing for years: attach their ad to great content regardless of what screen it is viewed on.

Programmatic TV is making it simple for advertisers to use syndicated and proprietary data to identify the programming mostly likely to engage the right consumers. As it turns out, these aren't necessarily national buys. Programmatic TV platforms are easing the process of buying across stations, networks and markets — a process that used to involve multiple phone calls and negotiations, now accomplished with the flick of an Enter key.

When it comes to video, don't let mythmaking make you miss out on the biggest platform of them all. It's not for nothing that TV has been the most prestigious and most effective ad platform for the last 70 years. TV is alive, well, and not going anywhere.

About the Author

Mickey Wilson is chief marketing officer at WideOrbit, which develops programmatic TV platforms and advertising management software for TV stations and networks. She is also a reality TV aficionado and lifelong New England Patriots fan.

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