Making Viewers Happy While Making Money for the Networks: A Comparison of the Usability, Enhanced TV and TV Commerce Features between Broadcast and Cable Network Web Sites

Louisa Ha
Bowling Green State University, louisah@bgsu.edu

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Making Viewers Happy While Making Money for the Networks: A Comparison of the Usability, Enhanced TV and TV Commerce Features between Broadcast and Cable Network Web Sites

Louisa Ha
Bowling Green State University

paper presented at the Management and Sales Division, Broadcast Education Association Annual Convention, Las Vegas, Nevada, April 4-7, 2002
Background

- Media entertainment web sites most popular (72% of web visitors)
- Broadcast TV and Cable TV networks: Largest players in entertainment on the Web (e.g., July 2001)
- Ad-supported cable sites: 44 mil. visitors
- Broadcast TV network sites: 11.3 mil visitors
Significance of Web Presence

- National coverage
- Reach non-TV viewers and viewers in the work-place
- Different types of programming between broadcast and cable TV may exhibit different use of the Web
Research Questions

- Are there any diff. between broadcast and Cable TV networks web sites
- What enhanced TV features are being used? Features associate with program genres?
- How high is the usability of the sites?
- What preliminary TV commerce features available on their web sites?
Enhanced TV

- The use of the features of the Internet to improve or enhance the viewing experience of TV viewers

- Values of enhanced TV
  - 1. Increase time spent viewing
  - 2. Attract viewers’ attention and keep them engaged in programs
Four Major Types of Enhanced TV Features (Hurst, 2000)

- Fan-based: foster relationship with fans of a show e.g., chat rooms
- Game-based: enable users to participate or simulate a contestant’s experience on a game show e.g., play-along games
- Information-based: provide supplemental, personalizable news/sports/weather information e.g., background
- Programming-based: facilitate a viewer’s programming selection process and delivery of program content to viewers e.g., TV schedule
Fandom and Usability

- Commercial value of fans
- Web sites meet demands of fans and create fans
- Build brand loyalty and tool to promote on-air TV programs
- Pleasant experience on the Web depends on web site usability and interactivity
- Nine usability items based on Nielsen (1999)
TV Commerce

- Decline in TV commercial viewership and ad revenue
- Alternative source of revenue: use the large TV audience base to conduct business transactions – TV commerce
- Sell own TV products (e.g., video download, videotapes, memorabilia)
- Sell advertisers’ products (charge commission as intermediaries)
Method

- Quantitative and Qualitative Content Analyses
- Quantitative phase: all broadcast TV networks and 15 cable TV networks web sites
- Qualitative phase: ABC, PBS, MTV, CNBC and Lifetime
Quantitative Analysis: Broadcast Vs. Cable

- 95 web pages analyzed: 47% broadcast TV programs, 53% cable TV programs
- News programs and drama series most commonly featured in network web sites
- Broadcast much more likely to feature game shows, comedies and daytime soaps
- Cable much more likely to feature their news and documentary programs
- Broadcast networks scored lower than cable TV networks in usability
Quantitative Analysis: Enhanced TV Usage

- Broadcast and Cable TV highly similar in enhanced TV features usage
- Cable TV sell products of the network, not individual programs and sell advertisers’ products on their sites
- ABC most diversified in enhanced TV features, NBC and UPN more into fan-based features. PAX more into programming-based features.
Quantitative Analysis – Program Genres

- Daytime soaps outperform all other program genres in game-based features.
- Dramas have highest likelihood of TV commerce presence.
- News programs more likely to have information-based features.
- Sports have most video-clips and statistics information.
Enhanced TV Strategy Models

Welcome All

- e.g., ABC
- Fans-Friendly
  - e.g., MTV

Viewers

Non-viewers

Hello

- e.g., Lifetime
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Channel</th>
<th>Network</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIFETIME</td>
<td>MTV</td>
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<tr>
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<td>A &amp; E</td>
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<td>TNT</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCI-FI</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Hello Model Fans** - Friendly Model Welcome All Modes
“Welcome All” Strategy Model

Implications

- Appropriate for established broad audience based broadcast and cable TV networks
- High resource commitments to satisfy needs of both fans and occasional viewers
- Can use both advertising and TV commerce as source of revenues
“Fans-Friendly” Strategy Model Implications

- Fans-friendly – most appropriate for established niche-cable networks
  - can conduct TV commerce to realize its fans’ support
  - sophisticated features
  - maintenance cost high per visitor
  - TV commerce more important than advertising support in these sites
“Hello” Strategy Model

Implication

- Most appropriate for new and upcoming broadcast and cable TV networks
- Investment on the future
- TV commerce limited to program content
- Advertising can be an important source of revenue but need to create a fine balance of content and advertising