

SOCIAL TV

how marketers can
reach and engage audiences
by connecting television to
the web, social media, and mobile

MIKE PROULX
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*For the late Don Harley.
Your mentorship has forever lighted my lamp.*

—M.C.P.

For WJR.D.

Keep watching!!!!

—S.S.H.

Preface

What Is in a Name?

Television has always been social. It would seem, then, that the name of our book, *Social TV*, implies that there is nothing new to say about the beloved entertainment medium. Yet that could not be further from the truth. Television nowadays is a very different experience than it was in 1941, when TV advertisements first began airing in the United States.¹

According to its strictest definition, the phrase “social TV” was coined to depict the convergence of television and social media. However, social TV has often been used in recent years as a catchall expression when referring to the modern era of television. While we tend to prefer the former definition, we painted using broad brush strokes throughout the book.

Television’s love affair with social media comprises a sizable chunk of our narrative. We also tackle the effect that mobile and tablet devices have had on the medium (Chapters 4 and 8) and examine the growing impact of Internet-connected TVs (Chapter 9). Recognizing that the blending of media also gives TV audiences a much more personalized experience, we even included a section dedicated to addressable advertising (Chapter 7).

We wrote this book as a guide for marketers. Each chapter illustrates a slice of the television landscape, fraught with examples and case studies, followed by a deep dive into the advertising implications that result. Mobile QR codes conclude each chapter. By simply scanning these with your smartphone, you will access “second screen” companion content that brings to life many of the examples we illustrate within the book.

We intend *Social TV* to appeal not only to brands but also agencies, television networks, content creators, educators, and even TV viewers. In order to keep the book manageable in size and scope, we focus primarily on broadcast television series and events. While we have included some content on news and sports, each of those verticals could be a book in and of themselves.

Though we interviewed nearly fifty companies and featured many additional ones throughout *Social TV*, it simply was not possible to include a description of or story about every player within the space. New companies with interesting solutions seem to crop up every week. So instead, we attempted to provide enough of a representative cross-section to help illustrate the most important trends that are impacting television today. You will also notice that—because things are changing at breakneck speed—Chapter 11 can only be accessed online. We purposefully waited to write the last chapter just as *Social TV* was released in order to bring you the most up-to-date information.

That is why one need not go back over seven decades to witness the

profound shift in the media landscape. Television is changing before our very eyes. It is a perpetual work in progress; a living medium influenced by advances in technology and evolutions in human culture. Yet as TV continues to change in both form and function, it will forever remain social at its core. Welcome to *Social TV*.

—Mike and Stacey

Notes

1. http://www.bulova.com/en_us/legacy

Acknowledgments

Social TV is our first book and we did not know *exactly* what to expect throughout its 10-month proposal, development, and launch process. The two of us are both floored by the level of support we have received from our colleagues, friends, and families.

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Our book would be nothing without its content and we want to thank the people who provided us excellent seed material from which to write. In total, we spoke with nearly 50 different companies and over 75 industry leaders in order to glean background content, case studies, and/or direct quotes. Each of the following people enthusiastically made themselves available for meetings or conference calls and, in many cases, multiple follow-ups:

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I owe a lot of gratitude to Adam Cutone, who sacrificed most of the 2011 sailing season with me so that I could focus on writing during any and all free time I had outside of work. I will not forget the many surprise home cooked meals and the altruistic understanding he showed along the way, often saying, “I know how important this book is to you.”

To my family, especially my dad, the late Jerry Proulx, who taught me at a very young age why hard work and relentless discipline always lead to great outcomes. And to my mother, Anita Proulx, whose unwavering courage and childlike curiosity constantly remind me that life is a giant adventure filled with moments to be seized. In the parental “luck-of-the-draw,” I feel like I won the grand prize.

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and had to do her homework while they were doing theirs.

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About the Authors

Mike Proulx has spent the last 16 years working at various digital media and high-tech companies on the agency-side, client-side, and as an entrepreneur. His love of technology started when he was introduced to computers as a fourth grader in 1982 learning to program BASIC on a Radio Shack® TRS-80™.

Mike's career has constantly found him at the center of early and radical shifts in the media landscape. In 1996, Mike helped launch an online search engine at a company that had been focused on CD-ROMs. In 2000, he oversaw the development of then-nascent rich media websites for the entertainment industry. And in 2007, Mike was working in social media well before it became a part of our common lexicon.

At Hill Holliday, Mike oversees digital strategy and social media for the agency's roster of clients with an eye toward interconnecting media channels. Turning media on its side to create new experiences fascinates Mike. His passion for Web plus TV convergence led him to conceive, produce, direct, and cohost Hill Holliday's TVnext summit in January of 2011. A frequent speaker, Mike has also contributed to a number of publications, including *BusinessWeek*.

Mike's client experience spans an extremely diverse set of vertical industries, including brands such as Warner Brothers, Columbia Tri-Star, AMC, IBM, Chili's, CVS/pharmacy, Novartis, Cigna, Dunkin' Donuts, Major League Baseball, TJ Maxx, Marshalls, and HomeGoods.

Mike earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from the University of New Hampshire in 1995 and his Master of Science in Computer Information Systems from Bentley College in 2002.

You can follow Mike on Twitter at @McProulx or via his blog at www.mikeproulx.com.

Stacey Shepatin leads Hill Holliday's national broadcast buying practice, which involves directing the strategy, recommendation, and implementation for all national television buying and direct response advertising for Hill Holliday's portfolio of clients.

In 2010, Stacey led the formation of the Strategic Media Partnership Group, where she manages a multidisciplinary team and creates cross media programs for her clients.

Stacey is a lead negotiator on the Magna Global Advisory Council and is a member of the 4A's National Television Committee.

This past year, Stacey led the agency's efforts for (RED) during their World AIDS Day Campaign, which won an Ad Club Media Maven award for best Media Plan with Spending under \$1 million. In 2003, Stacey was named an Advertising Age Media Maven.

Stacey is a 1990 graduate of Colgate University, where she received a

Bachelor of Arts in Economics and was the captain of the varsity softball team. She lives in Boston with her husband and three children, and enjoys playing tennis in her free time.

Introduction

The World of Tomorrow

On Thursday, April 20, 1939, Radio Corporation of America President David Sarnoff announced the dawn of commercial television in the United States. Sarnoff's remarks described the medium as "a new art, so important in its implications, that it is bound to affect all society."¹

His address strategically took place 10 days before the opening ceremony of the New York World's Fair. Themed as "The World of Tomorrow," the RCA-owned National Broadcasting Company fittingly transmitted US President Franklin D. Roosevelt's keynote address over the airwaves, marking the official birth of regularly scheduled television broadcasts in the United States.²

With much public allure surrounding this new medium, *Popular Mechanics* featured an article by Mr. Sarnoff in its September 1939 issue, simply titled, "The Future of Television." Underscoring the importance of content in the pioneering world of TV, Sarnoff wrote, "Let us consider next what sort of programming material television may present to its audience."³ Throughout the many decades to come, writers and producers rose to the challenge to create programming that entertained and touched television audiences by providing them with a temporary escape from the often stark realities of the world outside of their living rooms.

Many remember watching Lucy and Ethel try to wrap chocolate candies off of a speedy conveyor belt on September 15, 1952 in what is today a classic *I Love Lucy* moment.⁴ Forty-four percent of households tuned in to *The Beverly Hillbillies* on January 8, 1964 to see Granny chase a kangaroo around the Clampetts' home in "The Giant Jackrabbit" episode.⁵

Audiences were in tears by the dramatic story told in *Roots*, an eight-part miniseries that made its debut on January 23, 1977.⁶ *The Cosby Show's* young Rudy Huxtable endeared us when she lip-synched Margie Hendricks on October 10, 1984.⁷ "Yadda Yadda Yadda" is forever ingrained in our common lexicon thanks to the hilarious April 24, 1997 episode of *Seinfeld*.⁸ And millions of viewers watched a star be born on September 4, 2002, as Kelly Clarkson was named the very first *American Idol*.⁹

Television has produced countless resonant moments throughout its history. Even those who have not been moved or affected by a TV series have most certainly been impacted by watching events, news, or sports unfold across their

screens. As Sarnoff wrote in 1939, “With the advent of television, the combined emotional results of both seeing and hearing an event or a performance at the instant of its occurrence become new forces to be reckoned with.” But TV shows, events, news, and sports are not the only content on television.

TV Advertising Can Resonate Too

A television commercial is also content that has the potential to evoke resonance. The phrase, “I cry at Hallmark commercials” is a common and familiar one. It is hard to forget the 1979 Coca-Cola ad featuring a disgruntled Mean Joe Greene limping his way down a football stadium ramp. After being given a bottle of Coke from a young boy, the Pittsburgh Steelers defensive player gently tosses his football jersey to him saying, “Hey kid. Catch.”¹⁰

We were similarly heartened in 2011 by a young “Darth Vader” trying to exert his telekinetic powers on a series of objects in and around his house: the exercise bike, the family dog, the washer and dryer, a baby doll, and even his sandwich. To his extreme disappointment, “the Force” did not seem to be strong within him. But then his dad, arriving home from work, pulls up his Volkswagen Passat into the driveway. A reinvigorated “Vader” seizes the opportunity to give his powers a go just one more time. As he channels all of his concentration and might while extending and pointing his arms toward the front of the car, the ignition suddenly fires (thanks to Dad using the remote starter). Our adorable Darth Vader is visibly shocked that, from his point of view, the Force came through for him after all.

The resonance of this particular Volkswagen TV commercial drove people online to experience it again and to share it with others. The official VW YouTube upload has generated over 45 million views¹¹ and is a great example of how the Web and television are complementing versus competing with one another.

The Internet Did Not Kill Television

While many people have proclaimed the death of television, the over-70-year-old medium is as healthy and alive as it has ever been. In fact, we are watching more television than ever before. According to research company Nielsen, the average American watches just over 35 hours of television per week,¹² in spite of the rise in online and mobile video viewing. The Internet has not killed TV; it has actually become its best friend. It is a companion for the growing masses of television viewers who are simultaneously going online while tuning in to

their favorite shows.

The Web, social media, and mobile are rapidly converging with television and affecting the way in which we experience programming. David Sarnoff wrote a prophetic statement in 1939: “Television will finally bring to people in their homes, for the first time in history, a complete means of instantaneous participation in the sights and sounds of the entire outer world.”

Over seven decades later, we are facing a period of *déjà vu*. Social media has created a new and powerful “backchannel” that is fueling the renaissance of live broadcasts. Mobile and tablet devices allow us to watch and experience both on-demand and live television whenever and wherever we want. And “connected TVs” blend Web and television content into a unified big screen experience—once again, at the center of our living rooms.

Although the television industry is undergoing a grandiose state of flux, it is also in the midst of one of its most exciting time periods; the outcome of which will only make TV more compelling, more interactive, and more accessible. And while the way in which we experience television continues to evolve, the medium is here to stay. The rise of a new medium does not always mean the end of another.

What Does This mean for Television Advertising?

Just as television is changing, so is its advertising. The blending of media channels has created new opportunities for marketers to reach and engage with their target audiences. And this shifting television landscape is not just affecting advertising creative, but also how agencies plan and buy media.

Brands can no longer simply consider the program that is being broadcast on the television set; to do so is myopic and frankly, shortsighted. They must instead look at the larger cross-channel media experience that occurs nowadays with TV audiences in order to maximize their brand’s impact within an ever-increasing distracted world.

The core of social TV starts with the backchannel, which is why we begin the book here. This is comprised of the millions of public conversations happening online while television programming airs. Brands who find ways to align themselves with or be a part of the backchannel unlock an entire audience with whom to engage.

Following Chapter 1, the next chapters are sequenced in the order in which audiences tend to experience television. Chapter 2 tackles the quickly evolving social TV guide landscape and examines how individuals discover what to watch in the modern era of television. Once one knows what he or she is going to watch, they may use any myriad of TV check-in apps that are growing in

numbers and features, as illustrated in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 builds from our backchannel chapter and dives more deeply into the second screen experiences that television viewers have while watching TV. We discuss the concept of “synchronized applications” here, which provide opportunities for synched advertising.

Starting with Chapter 5, we examine what happens after a TV episode concludes to investigate the correlation between social media engagement and television ratings. We look not just at the TV shows themselves but also how to measure “social ratings” for TV commercials. Chapter 6 addresses the engagement with television shows that happens in between their episode airings—something we call “bridge content.” When executed well, this can be a welcomed and ripe territory for branded entertainment.

Chapter 7 begins to take a turn in the television landscape with addressable advertising. The ability to target television commercials to eliminate any wasted impressions is the Holy Grail for brands. Chapter 8 gets us outside of the living room and illustrates the portability and accessibility of television that exists thanks in large part to mobile and tablet devices. Chapter 9 tackles the notion of Web plus television convergence head-on to bring to light the opportunities for brands within the connected TV world.

Our book concludes with a case study that ties all of the previous chapters together. We also illustrate how the blending of media is only going to continue making it that much more complex for brands to navigate. Given this, we highlight specific advice to advertisers from several of the industry leaders we interviewed to round out the chapter and the book.

Cutting to the Chase

The punch line of the book is a simple one—and it all points back to content. As it relates to television, people want to talk about and share the programming (including advertising) that resonates the most with them. Social media cannot and will not save a bad show or make poor products and services “look good.” But social media absolutely has a powerful amplification effect in the presence of resonant content. And the evidence of this exists right before our very eyes in the millions of social impressions that comprise television’s backchannel.

Scan for More

Scan this QR code using your mobile device for videos and visuals of the examples referenced throughout this section.



Don't have a smartphone with a QR reader app? No problem. You can access companion content directly by going to <http://www.socialtvbook.net/tagged/introduction>.

Notes

1. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4hPX_PLC-o
2. <http://www.bairdtelevision.com/RCA.html>
3. <http://books.google.com/books?id=r9sDAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA321>
4. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0043208/episodes#year-1952>
5. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yQJbJQdymA&feature=related>
6. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0075572/>
7. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XSvGdfOfLFw>
8. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0697814/>
9. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0319931/episodes#season-1>
10. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xffOCZYX6F8>
11. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R55e-uHQa0>
12. <http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/reports-downloads/2011/cross-platform-is-the-new-norm.html>