

JULY 2009

Media Tidbits from Around the World

Broadcasters compete to put TV on cell phones

On June 11, when stations in the US were required to broadcast (over the air) through digital rather than analog signals, some companies used the broadcast spectrum freed by the switch to transmit live television to cell phones and other portable devices (Mobile DTV). Shows and live video clips are already available on some phones, but this heats up competition as broadcasters and cell phone companies vie to turn the feature into a must-have.

There are 3 broad technologies of receiving TV signals on a mobile device – MediaFlo technology from Qualcomm, ATSC – M/H Advanced television systems committee and DVB-H.

How do consumers access Mobile DTV?



Customers will be using for viewing several types of handheld and Mobile DTV devices such as mobile phones, laptop computers, net books, car based devices, portable media players, GPS navigation devices etc. We will see new “families” of devices and applications coming out soon, designed and manufactured by leading consumer electronic manufacturers.

About 13 million people in the US watched video on their cell phones in the first three months of this year, which is about 6% of all mobile subscribers, according to the Nielsen Co. That’s a 50% increase over the same time last year. Mobile TV services such as Qualcomm’s Flo TV, MobiTV and Transpera are all competing to serve this relative sliver of consumers.

Broadcasters will be pushing customers to use a service provided by Open Mobile Video Coalition, a group that represents more than 28 station groups in the U.S. and will broadcast local TV to mobile handsets, net books and MP3 players. Broadcasters have an advantage because they don’t need to buy spectrum and don’t have to find new programming or content. Manufacturers such as LG have been happy to make devices that can receive this signal and will roll them out by the end of the year.

Some early adopters are already using MobiTV, that provides on-demand video and live TV over a carrier’s data network rather than over a television spectrum. However, the quality of Live TV is a concern on the mobile spectrum.

Mobile Digital Television (DTV) represents a significant new revenue stream for the broadcasting industry as well as a new way to reach more customers.

Nesties' Demographic in Focus

Nesties are a demographic subset of women who are going through a series of intense, mega life changes in a compressed period of time -- and as a result are spending as much on consumer goods as they have ever spent in their lives.

TheKnot.com, recently conducted a study on this demographic. The result was the classification of this marketing-friendly group dubbed "Nesties" -- 25 to 32 year-old women who are getting engaged, planning weddings, shopping for houses and preparing to have kids -- essentially planning for the next 20 years of their lives during a tight three to four year window. According to the elaborate report, which surveyed over 6,000 women this past February, Nesties wield a whopping \$283 billion in spending power. Yet, because of the heavy expenses incurred during many of their life-changing events, finances are top of mind, as less than a quarter claim to "only think about finances when they absolutely have to," according to the report. Half of Nesties say they are overwhelmed by financial burdens, and close to 70 percent say they are cautious about spending on non-essentials. Despite the recession, they are still spending on major purchases like houses, wedding dresses and cribs. They are in the market at the same time for more things than maybe any other point in their lives, said the Knot study.

But what's so different about Nesties? Haven't women always gotten engaged, married and settled into family life? Not at such an accelerated pace. And most used to follow a more defined, linear path. What they have seen from this research is that there is a big overlap between engagement, being a newlywed and having a baby. Much more so than they anticipated. These life-stages are being compressed.

In 1999, the average age for a bride was 24. Today, it's 27-plus. The Knot study quotes, 'When you get married at 24, you are not necessarily thinking about a baby. When you get married at 27, that biological clock is suddenly ticking. It's causing some interesting overlap. As a result of delayed marriage, many couples make big lifestage jumps in a non-traditional order, such as first buying a home, then starting a family, and then getting married. There is this weird almost social shift where these lifestages are not as sequential as in the past. It's now one big soup'.

Thus, for media buyers, it's not as easy to bucket these different life-stages into distinct targets. This is where search, behavioral targeting, and not surprisingly, life-stage sites like BabyCenter.com and TheKnot.com, should excel.

(Courtesy – AdWeek)

Mobile News is gaining fast

The future of news delivery is on wireless devices, and those devices will be smartphones, much more than e-readers.

First, here's data about the ubiquity of wireless as of the end of 2008, which is already nearly half a year ago, all from CTIA- "The Wireless Association"

- The U.S. has 270.3 million wireless subscribers, which is the equivalent of 87% of the entire population. At the end of 2005 the penetration was just 69%. It looks like only centenarians and some of the sub-teen population are still without cellphones.
- 17.5% of households are wireless-only and have no “land line” (one of those retro-formations, like “analog watch”). This is more than double the 2005 level of 8.4%.
- 1 trillion SMS messages were sent out during 2008, which is more than 10 times the 2005 level of 81 billion.



Now, at the cutting edge of all these wireless users are the smart-phone owners, and some insights into them as well:

- * More than half of smart-phone users see applications as essential to the experience: “When the iPhone was launched, it was a \$500 piece of crap. Now, with applications, it’s a minicomputer”.
- * “App phone users” — those smart-phone users who have downloaded applications — report spending an average of two hours a day using their phone; 40% of that time is devoted to application use, and they interact with their phone on an average 30 times a day.

A report on Beet.TV shows that the New York Times in April served up 60 million mobile views, twice the level of April 2008. Further in Beet’s story:

- * Nielsen says there are 53.4 million mobile internet users in the U.S. (this would be about 20% of the 270.3 million wireless subscribers reported above, but undoubtedly the fraction is growing).
- * Of these, 22.3 million are using their mobile phone to access news.
- * Half of those (11.6 million) are visiting CNN.com.
- * However, among iPhone users, 80% are browsing the Web.
- * The New York Times iPhone application has been downloaded 2 million times.

As far as news is concerned, with this kind of momentum for mobile delivery, the race (if there ever was one) between smartphones and e-readers may well be over. Sure, e-paper is a superior interface, but smartphones win, because they can do 10, 20 or 100 things besides letting you read black-and-white print. All this Web access by smartphones is likely to overtake Web viewing via broadband. U. S. households with computers have leveled off at about 80%. Most of those of internet access, most internet access is now broadband, but still, less than 70% of households are hooked up with broadband, versus the above-cited 87% of all individuals with cell phones.

One implication of the small screen, when it comes to news: we may be less inclined to work hard for news by searching, surfing and visiting aggregators, and more inclined to let the news come to us, by whatever means. The challenge then for publishers, maybe to create applications that deliver custom-tailored news to fit preferences and interests of phone users.

HBO's Innovative marketing for the 2nd season of True Blood

HBO put a different spin on fake brands when touting the second season of "True Blood".

This time around, familiar household brands such as Ecco, Geico, Harley-Davidson, MINI, Gillette and Monster.com, promote fictional products to a specific, non-existent, target audience: Vampires.



Ads are running in US Weekly, TV Guide, New York Times, New York magazine and AM New York, among others.

This cross-promotional campaign is unique in the unexpected way that large, recognizable brands took a gamble with a tie-in to a series about vampires co-existing with humans. Then again, it seems like the "Twilight" series isn't going away anytime soon, so associating a brand with vampires might be more strategic than risky.



The ad created for MINI urges the vampire set to "feel the wind in your fangs" while a Harley-Davidson ad encourages vampires to "outrun the sun", and the ad for Monster.com has an interesting copy which reads, "When you sleep in a coffin, it's easy to think outside the box."

Unique URLs found in each ad (think www.truebloodshave.com) drive viewers to HBO's official "True Blood" website.

BMW signs on as exclusive sponsor on 3rd season of Mad Men



BMW has signed on as the exclusive sponsor of the Season 3 premiere of AMC's Mad Men, which airs with limited commercial interruption. This marks a return engagement for BMW, which helped the network kick off last season's run with a flight of on-air and online promotions. Along with a 60-second spot, the automaker was also incorporated into AMC's "Mad-vertising" initiative, a DVR-thwarting execution that paired the brand with industry-related trivia.

Since debuting two summers ago, Mad Men has become one of the most celebrated drama series on television. The series won the Golden Globe for Best Television Series-Drama in 2007 and 2008.

N.Y. Stations to Pool Video News Content

Four TV stations in the US's largest TV market have formed a Local News Service to pool video news gathering resources, a practice that is fast becoming standard operating procedure in major markets.

In New York, the four stations that agreed to form the LNS are: WNYW-TV, Fox Television's owned and operated station; WNBC-TV, NBC Universal's owned and operated station; WPIX-TV,

Tribune's The CW affiliate; and WCBS-TV, CBS Television's owned and operated stations. While the stations may share video, each station will operate independently, putting its own spin to commonly covered stories.

Conan O' Brien's ratings slip



On June 1, the premiere of "The Tonight Show with Conan O'Brien" on NBC began with a filmed piece that found the tall, skinny host, dressed in suit and tie, jogging across America to get to his new studio in Universal City. But O'Brien might need to pick up the pace. After a strong start in the ratings, "Tonight" is already slipping behind CBS' "Late Show with David Letterman," the rival program that O'Brien's predecessor Jay Leno defeated easily for years.

On the night of June 1, Letterman edged past O'Brien in the overnight household ratings (3.4 rating/8 share vs. 2.9 rating/7 share) for the first time since O'Brien took over his show, according to data from Nielsen Media Research. More troubling for NBC, "Tonight" has also lost significant chunks of audience with each airing since the premiere, when it scored a hefty 7.1 rating/17 share.

These figures don't tell the whole story, though. O'Brien's premiere was heavily promoted, so a steep drop-off in viewers afterward was to be expected. Also, the NBA Finals on ABC have disrupted some local programming around the country. And maybe most important, while Leno's audience skewed old for a late-night program, NBC points out that O'Brien is strongest among young adults. It won't be clear how well the host is hanging on to those viewers until the complete ratings for O'Brien's first week are published. It's likely that, even with his declines, O'Brien will still emerge stronger among young people than Leno was. And given that rates for most TV ads are determined by a program's success in wooing viewers under 50, that may be more than enough for NBC.

The real battle is just beginning. Late-night rating trends tend to shift slowly, as viewers develop loyalties for this or that host over months or years. The chaotic late-night race today bears little resemblance to that era. In the fall, NBC will launch a new 10 p.m. weeknight show with Leno. The impact of that program on O'Brien's ratings is yet to be seen. Meanwhile, both Letterman and O'Brien will have to keep an eye over their shoulders.

Integrating Social Media - Skittles.com - a step in the right direction

If you haven't seen the site, it's based on leveraging different social-media sites linked together by a very simple menu navigation that floats on any of the sites. For example, the home page and "chatter" section is the brand's Twitter page, the video media page is the brand's YouTube page, the video images page is the brand's Flickr stream, and the "friends" section is the Facebook fan-page profile.



The Skittles home page Opens the Wikipedia page of Skittles



The Photos section Opens to Flickr

The reality is, Skittles has done this completely right. This solution was quick to produce, leverages existing communities that have great interest in the product and creates a platform that further engages the consumer. It is recommended that any brand with minimal budget and the right kind of audience drop the brand sites they currently have, which is anyway not terribly effective.

The age of the microsite is not over. The successful microsites, both low and high budget, will undoubtedly have one thing in common: a simple open infrastructure for integrating into popular web communities and leveraging their social nature.

Skittles has unabashedly made the bold leap into accepting they can't control the way their brand is defined in today's social web and can only try their best to participate in the conversation. They're taking the good with the bad, and I can assure you all that good is going to dramatically outweigh the bad.

If you want an easy indicator of how this site does, check out the number of Facebook friends it already has in place (about 600,000). Other measurements, such as the number of comments it has on its YouTube videos and images, and general comments and sentiments can also be helpful indicators, but the Facebook figure serves at the simplest indicator for most casual observers.



The Chatting section Open to the brand Twitter page



The Friends Page Opens to the brand Facebook page

Digital Innovation - Posting Twitter Messages from Display Ads

Nestle's Juicy Juice may be the first to allow users to post tweets within an ad unit that can appear anywhere on the web.

Juicy Juice is testing the unit, from SocialMedia, for one month on mom-targeted sites BabyCenter and CafeMom. The units ask questions such as "How do you stimulate your child's mind?" or "How important are vitamin-enhanced foods to you?" and users can answer the queries as short messages, or tweets, directly in the ad.

If users are logged on to Twitter, the answers will be posted to the ad directly; otherwise users are first directed to Twitter.com to sign in. Posts, which also appear in users' Twitter feeds with a

“hashtag” (the symbol #, used to group keywords or events for simpler searches on the site) are moderated by Nestle, but there's the option for that to be turned off.

Clicking on the ad unit, meanwhile, takes the user to Juicy Juice's YouTube site, which is full of helpful videos, including a scary one about how many more germs per inch are on a water fountain than your average toilet seat.

The difference between this campaign, dubbed “Twitter Pulse” by SocialMedia, and other recent attempts is that it allows a conversation to be instigated by -- or occur within -- the ad unit, rather than just syndicating tweets already posted on Twitter.

The ad unit is paid placement but the additional impressions are effectively earned media, and the hashtag then reaches the follower base of those who have entered tweets, and potentially sparks more attention and conversation.

SocialMedia is tracking a number of metrics for Juicy Juice, including traditional views and click-through rates but also number of tweets posted and the number of followers exposed to the hashtag on Twitter. Like other executions with Twitter, there is no revenue involved with the microblogging service, but it could be a potential source of new sign-ups and increased usage.

Digital Innovation - 'Talk to the plant' experiment - Heinz

Dubbed “Talk to the Plant”, the site lets visitors type in words of encouragement which will be played through voice synthesis to plants that are housed in a Swedish lab. Inspired by the statistic that 75% of plant owners talk to their plants, Daddy's goal is to determine if they grow better with



Talk to the plant



The test plant is on the left and the control plant on the right.

human interaction. The site also features a blog and provides info on Heinz's ketchup-growing methods.

The objective with talktotheplant.com – The Interactive Ketchup Growing Experiment was to explore if tomato plants grows better with human interaction. And to prove that no one grows ketchup like Heinz.

Experiment time was set to six weeks. Evaluation after those six weeks resulted in a prolonged experiment. The total time for the experiment was eight weeks.

Hypothesis - Interacting with a tomato plant will result in better growth. The internet will help us prove it.

Test of hypothesis - The sound-only interaction from participating humans (18,774 messages sent in

total) resulted in 153 cm growth. The control plant grew 146 cm. A difference in 7 cm.

Does it prove the effect? Hard to say. The height lead was not constant during the experiment.

Does this prove that no one grows ketchup like Heinz? Definitely. Hypothesis accepted as plant growth and participation levels clearly proves the substance of this claim.

The brand claim however, can be considered significant in strengthening the Heinz brand as a true tomato expert. Has any other ketchup maker tried to grow tomatoes like this? Turning the tomato plant into a social object – disconnected from traditional commercial messages, Heinz has proved that no one grows ketchup like Heinz.

Flashmob - Hammertime dance time



American cable television channel A&E is promoting its new documentary Hammertime with a video featuring a flash mob wearing Hammer Pants. The documentary, focuses on the rise and fall of MC Hammer, the rapper known for his shiny parachute pants.

A Flashmob runs into a trendy Sunset Boulevard store, Live! on Sunset, and begins dancing to MC Hammer's 1990 hit, "U Can't Touch This."

The video has been riding up the viral charts. www.youtube.com/watch?v=vfxCnZ4Dp3c

Medium is the message



'Makita drill' drilled over 20,000 holes into a wall to create a huge black and white image of a Makita drill.

Best of Virals

Durex – Get it on

The new film for Durex takes a decidedly comedic twist (position?) on encouraging the use of its products in the US. The short is called Get it On and done by the Süperfad team.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t5sTBrS4fhQ>

Diesel – XXX

Diesel's irreverent reworking of some used footage.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lcIXGYx7PaE>