

MEDIA RESEARCH CLUB OF CHICAGO

M R C C
REVIEW

The newsletter for all media professionals

Looking Ahead to a New Season...

Allison M. Johnson
Zenith Media

Lights, camera, action! It's just about that time for the dawning of a new television season. This fall we are in store for a great deal of excitement as we witness the launch of two new networks- The CW and My Network TV. The CW is the more notable network stemming from the merger between UPN and the WB earlier in the year. The network will launch in more than 90% of the county featuring the top programming from the former WB and UPN networks. The CW should provide a much stronger platform for

delivering quality programming and reaching the desirable young adult audiences.

While the CW will be the new home for many of our old favorites, My Network TV will also launch in September to nearly 91% of the

country, ushering in a new genre – novellas - to the American viewing tradition. Novellas are quite popular on Spanish television and the format has found success in more than 100 countries around the world. These compelling storylines will consist of American versions of the most notable Spanish novellas. The series will feature shorter story arcs that will conclude every 13 weeks. Novellas are known for their intense storylines, which gain momentum daily dealing with love, lust, money, family, power, revenge and of course dirty little secrets. The biggest challenge they will face is having viewers commit to strip programming.

Aside from all of the attention given to the budding new networks, the big four will return with a renewed focus. They will enter this season committed to delivering original programming beyond the confines of tradition. We have witnessed the growing trends in making programming available to as many people possible and on as many platforms that will

allow. This season, all of the networks will embrace this effort as they launch vignettes on cell phones, and make top programming available online. Many networks have learned the benefits of delivering as many original episodes as possible.

Top ranking programs typically do not repeat well because they have already been viewed by large audiences. FOX's 24 does not repeat itself and that keeps the program fresh with viewers. They commit to tuning in because they know they will receive something new and exciting each week. ABC's NYPD Blue used this strategy in the past and it was quite successful. NBC will embrace this

model with two of its series, ER, whose repeats fall off tremendously and its new drama, The Black Donnelley's with whom it will share the time period. ER will launch in the fall with all original episodes. The Black Donnelley's will join the schedule in December with a limited run through the first of the year. ER will then return with more original episodes. We can expect

other networks to explore similar models with limited run series filling in the gaps throughout the season.

More than the platforms on which they air, programming has to be exceptionally compelling in order to drive viewers to seek it elsewhere. The highest rated programs on television are on top because they made a connection with viewers. Grey's Anatomy, CSI, American Idol, Desperate Housewives, Lost, House, 24 and Prison Break are all among the top programs that have reached viewers in a unique way.

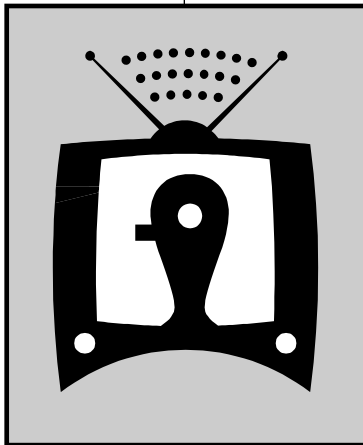


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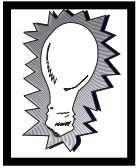
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PRESIDENT'S NOTES

by Brent G. Lightfoot
SRDS

Fall Preview

The hot and hazy days of summer are here, and I hope you have been able to get away from the office for at least a few days to relax. It's interesting how much we Americans romanticize the summer vacation and, yet rarely take one ourselves. If you're anything like me, you take a few days here and there around meetings, business trips, client calls, etc. This summer is no different at the Lightfoot household: at the last moment we decided to get out of town for a short four-day visit to Michigan. With any luck, I'll find some more time before the kids are back in school and our schedule goes in to hyper-drive. I hope that you can do the same!

Speaking of summer, I want to thank Julie Erbe for all the hard work she put into coordinating the MRCC Summer Outing. The King Tut exhibit at the Field Museum was a great event. Over 50 MRCC members and guests enjoyed lunch followed by scheduled time in the Tut exhibit. The sight of all the children on fieldtrips that day brought back some good memories – Nan from Starcom noted that she had last seen Tut on a 7th grade field trip. It will be a challenge to top this year's event. Everyone seemed to have a great time, and we all learned a few things as well.

Plans are firming up nicely for the MRCC's 12th Biennial Symposium. It will be held on Tuesday, October 10th at the Holliday Inn City Centre – 300 East Ohio. The event will provide perspective on what's out there, as well as attempt to answer two important, ongoing questions: **"What is the next big thing" in new media technology?** **"What are the implications for media measurement"** as

new measurement metrics are making media planning and buying more challenging than ever?

We are not trying to breeze past Summer but, amazingly enough, Fall is right around the corner. The good news is this means that the new Fall TV lineup is waiting to debut. We have received so much positive feedback over the years about Sam Armando's Fall TV lineup presentations, that we are having him back to share

his insights on the new Fall shows. He will also recap his predictions from last year and look into the crystal ball for the next big thing! Please join us at **Maggiano's on Tuesday, August 8th**. I look forward to seeing you there. **MRCC**

"What is the next big thing" in new media technology?

"What are the implications for media measurement"

RSVP by Credit Card

Note: The MRCC has made arrangements to accept credit cards via PayPal (Visa, MC, Amex, Discover). This must be done when registering online. Credit cards cannot be accepted at the door. Please be aware that there will be an additional 4% processing fee when paying by credit card.

June Meeting Notice

PLEASE RSVP!

Topic	The Fall Line Up
Speaker	Sam Armando, SVP Director of Broadcast Research, Starcom
Date	Tuesday, August 8th
Place	Maggiano's Banquets 111 W. Grand Avenue The Amarone Room
Time	Noon to 2 p.m.
Price	\$35 member \$45 non-member \$5 additional charge for Walk-Ins
Menu	Buffet-style lunch
RSVP	FAX your reservation to 312-329-0443 or RSVP at www.mrcc-online.com by noon THURSDAY, August 3rd. Cancellations must be received by this date.

NOTE: Be sure to RSVP to guarantee yourself a seat. We can only handle a small number of walk-ins.

UPCOMING EVENTS



September 12 —
**MRCC Luncheon:
Ethnic Marketing**

October 10 —
MRCC Symposium

Notes and Comments on the 2006-07 Broadcast Season

Libby Parella
MindShare

Another Fall broadcast season was announced with much fanfare in May, analyzed endlessly through June, an upfront languidly negotiated into July about which more ink was spilt....what more can be said about the state of broadcast? Every vein has been mined, every winding and narrow alley illuminated. What story has not yet been told? And what new can be added to that pile of words by one who (she sheepishly admits) hasn't yet seen all the pilots?

Because it's summer and there's a lot else to do outside the office, I'll be brief and confine my comments to the primetime schedules of five English language broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, FOX, NBC, and The CW). I have an inside-outsider's perspective: being neither a media negotiator nor a researcher, I don't "do" at this time of year; I simply observe and listen round corners.

Digital, Digital

During the May presentations, much was made of plans to keep restless viewers interested and engaged: broadband, internet, mobile, downloads, wireline, wireless, VOD, DVR...games, virtual communities and virtual worlds.

Devices delivering diversions are a fact of life for content producers, distributors, and advertisers, and their availability has changed the way many think about programming and advertising to consumers. All the networks have plans for robust internet and on-air extensions, designed to involve viewers and advertisers more deeply with their program offerings. While traditional situation comedies and episodic dramas appear on the schedules, emphasis on more serialized dramas and arced storylines opens the door for continuing off-air interactions.

Scheduling

The hoopla surrounding the Fall launch of a plethora of new programs continues, but Winter, Spring and Summer seasons are just as important. Several promising fictional series have been held for mid-season to refresh schedules and to give the series the benefit of premieres in less crowded promotional space. Reality series are "rested" and replace other limited run series. Long lead-times may also offer learnings on how buzz builds across platforms and over time.

As expected, schedules are still fluid, the announcement a starting gun. Some changes demonstrate confidence in returning shows; others have been made in anticipation of competitive pressure.

Schedule overview

Of twenty-nine new fall programs, only ten half-hour comedies have been scheduled. Single camera and improvisational comedies sit side by side with more traditional three-camera "situations." Eighteen dramas—both light and dark—launch in the fall, and serialized storylines in both genres are designed to keep audiences coming back week after week. Reality has largely moved away from humiliation toward aspiration and emotional connection, with talent contests and monetary windfalls motivating contestants and viewers. Returning franchises are mainly used strategically, to refresh a schedule or support new programming.

Whither comedy, whither drama?

The boundary between "drama" and "comedy" is porous: does it simply come down to length? Need for a half-hour here and an hour there? And is that decided with an eye on the aftermarket?

The ailing "sitcom" has been wept over and perhaps prematurely mourned. While the multi-camera sitcom played out in three acts on a proscenium stage is still very much in evidence, dramatic and filmic techniques are used to good effect in many new series. Half-hours promise to plumb depths of emotion experienced by three dimensional characters moving through time and space, seen through the gimlet eye of a twenty-two minute limit. So whither comedy? Alive and kicking, or undergoing heroic measures? Time will tell.

Serials

Serialized storylines, built in novelistic fashion with a strong spine, promise beginning, middle and end to the involved viewer. *24* was the first in the current thriller crop; *Desperate Housewives* took a different tack. Multiple platforms help keep the less committed viewer abreast of developments.

Similarities and contrasts

Something in the air, perhaps, has led to similar concepts rising to the top of the development soup. Two wedding programs (*Big Day* and *The Wedding Album*) take different approaches to these emotionally fraught rites. Family members disappear in

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Kidnapped and *Vanished*. Two programs—on the same network—examine the inner workings of fictional network television comedy/variety series. If *Supernanny* and *Nanny 911*, *Wife Swap* and *Trading Spouses*, can more or less peaceably coexist, why not these?

In reversals, bad guys become the good guys in *Smith*, *The Black Donnellys*, *The Knights of Prosperity* (originally titled *Let's Rob Mick Jagger*; presumably there's life after the Jagger job). Good guys who act like bad guys to each other put differences aside for the client in *Justice*.

Strangers connect through shared experience in *The Nine*, and through circumstance in *6°*. Families and old friends reconnect in *Brothers & Sisters*, *The Class*, and *In Case of Emergency*. Other friends discover that perhaps they are strangers after all in *Traveler*. Crisis negotiators in *Standoff* compete with each other, though their personal relationship begins to affect their job performance. Families forge new bonds in *Runaway*, becoming strangers to themselves when they go on the lam to lie doggo till the father's name can be cleared of a brutal murder.

The fish out of water comedic drama *Ugly Betty* (executive-produced by Salma Hayek and Ben Silverman) is adapted from the wildly popular Colombian telenovela, now a global phenomenon, about brains versus

beauty. In *Men in Trees*, Anne Heche is a relationship expert who realizes she knows nothing about men and moves to Alaska to adjust to the news.

Changing the form

New procedurals, more usually ensembles, are character-driven: *Shark* stars James Woods as a hyper-confident defense lawyer who jumps the fence to become a prosecutor. In *Raines*, Jeff Goldblum stars as a homicide detective whose victims lead him to their killers. *Daybreak* is suspenseful wish fulfillment as Tye Diggs plays a detective framed for murder relives the day of the event in the hope of discovering who is behind it. *Heroes* focuses on a group of people with inexplicable superpowers: a painter who paints the future; an unbreakable teenage girl; a man who teleports; another man who thinks he can fly.

What's in a name?

Another trend is muscular single-word titles for dramas: *Vanished*; *Kidnapped*; *Standoff*; *Runaway*; *Daybreak*; *Traveler*; *Justice*; *The Nine*; *Heroes*. All that's missing are the exclamation points! Proper nouns, naming places or characters: *Raines*; *Shark*; *Smith*; *Jericho* (the Biblical reference must be intentional), *30 Rock*. Ironic titles for comedic

dramas and dramatic comedies: *Ugly Betty*; *Men in Trees*; *The Knights of Prosperity*, *Big Day*, *Notes from the Underbelly*. Descriptive and metaphorical titles; *6°*; *Studio 60 on the Sunset Strip*; *The Black Donnellys*; *The Wedding Album*; *Friday Night Lights*.

Growing Up, Growing Older

Life stages are mined for story potential. *Til Death* stars Brad Garrett and Joely Fisher as a long-married couple whose new neighbors radiate newlywed bliss. *Happy Hour* is about a newly single guy whose roommate plans to teach him to have fun again, like it or not. *20 Good Years* stars John Lithgow and Jeffrey Tambor as unlikely pals in the full flower of midlife crisis. *Notes from the Underbelly* (logically paired with *Big Day*) is about a couple expecting their first child. *The Game*, a spin-off from The CW's *Girlfriends*, is about the wives and girlfriends of professional athletes.

Closing thoughts

This seems to be shaping up into a year for experimentation and learnings; investment in additional platforms may ultimately create viable business and communications opportunities. The broadcast networks seem to be seeking a balance between the traditional mass medium role and the multiple options for engaging audience. There is an electricity that no longer smells of fear, and a recognition that the competitive landscape includes not just one another, but cable, and all the internet might be able to offer. It's no longer a zero-sum game. Traditional formats and genres are still evident, but strong writing and production values and high concept comedies and dramas promise an exciting season.

But it still comes down to the content. No matter how strong the pilots are, the question of sustaining the storytelling engagement through multiple episodes remains. Whether from economic necessity or good instincts, effort is apparent to provide viewers and advertisers with choices appealing to segments of a broad audience. The range of genres, the reinvention of form, promise an interesting season ahead.

What good television storytelling promises—whether it's watched in real time, time-shifted, iPodded, DVRred, TiVoed or DVDed, downloaded, set-top-boxed, XBoxed, or Slingboxed—is an intimacy of experience. These characters and plots are playing themselves out in our homes, on our desks, on our laps or on our handhelds. It can be one to one or one to many, but good story well told is ultimately all we, as viewers, are after. **MRCC**

Libby Parella is Sr. Partner, Group Director-Media Initiatives at MindShare



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FOX has been very successful in this arena with its breakout hits 24 and Prison Break. The serial nature of these programs has not only attracted viewers but has been able to retain them week after week as they watch the storylines evolve, characters develop and the unexpected happen. More programs will imitate this format next season. From ABC we have the highly anticipated; The Nine, which follow the lives of nine individuals whose lives, become entwined following a bank robbery. Big Day is a comedy that will also follow this format gearing up to a major event, which happens to be a wedding. FOX will add one additional high concept series; Vanished which shows the aftermath that ensues when a prominent senator's wife goes missing and everyone becomes a suspect. NBC's Kidnapped follows a similar story line when a wealthy family's son is involved in a high stakes kidnapping. The CW also participates in this genre with Runaways, a series that follows a family on the run and a wrongly accused father who is desperately trying to clear his name all the while protecting his family. Collectively these high concept series will keep viewers stimulated for yet another season.

Fantasy based programming like Lost connected with viewers in a big way over the past two seasons. Its appeal is largely due to the unknown mystery and suspense associated with the genre. Imitation is the biggest compliment and we will see two new series that pattern themselves in this fashion. NBC's Heroes, deals with modern day civilian superheroes, and CBS' Jericho, which deals with the aftermath of a nuclear attack.

Comedy continues to rebound after losing the heavyweights Friends, Frasier and Everybody Loves Raymond in prior seasons. This year it will make up 22% the prime schedule. Part of the problem with this genre is that so much of it looks the same and nothing stands out. The networks are learning that the most successful comedies have their own point of view – something to make their programming unique i.e. The Office and My Name is Earl. Looking ahead we will see several series that follow this model. Knights of Prosperity (ABC) will feature an ensemble cast that set out to steal the lifestyle of superstar- Mick Jagger. There is some buzz about this series, as it does not imitate programming already on the air. Ugly Betty is a one-hour comedy; a feature that already distinguishes itself from other comedies and is an American adaptation of

a Spanish novella. Initial buzz on this series indicates that it could be the breakout hit of the season. Happy Hour (FOX) patterns itself after Friends and features a young adult ensemble cast whose characters have lives that are all entwined. NBC's 30 Rock is a workplace comedy that takes us behind the scenes of a TV comedy series. 'Til Death (FOX) looks at marriage through the eyes of newlyweds and those in it for the long haul. The Class (CBS) reunites schoolmates and brings out their unresolved issues.

Dramas continue to be very successful and comprise 45% of the prime schedule representing the largest genre. As I referenced earlier, successful programs are the ones that make a true connection with viewers. Among the new dramas several have made early connections and are generating buzz. Friday Night Lights (NBC) has a strong sense of family and camaraderie as a local town rallies behind the high school football team. Studio 60: Live On the Sunset Strip, also from NBC and Aaron Sorkin brings together an all-star cast for this behind the scenes look at the making of a late night sketch comedy series. The series will star Matthew Perry, Bradley Whitford, Amanda Peet, Steven Weber, Sarah Paulson, D.L. Hughley, Nathan Coddry, Carols Jacott, Evan Handler and Timothy Busfield. ABC's The Nine makes a powerful connection with viewers as it draws viewers into the lives of nine people who connect with each other following a traumatic experience. Chi McBride and Tim Daly will star. Shark (CBS) will pose a significant challenge to ER as James Woods returns to network television as a flamboyant district attorney leading a team of young prosecutors in Los Angeles. This powerful series will feature Spike Lee as one of its directors.

Reality continues to play a role on the prime schedule. Currently the genre makes up 17 % of the schedule. There are no new reality programs scheduled however, all of the perennial favorites will return but some have moved to new nights. Networks will continue to be test original reality programming in the summer. Looking ahead, CBS' the Amazing Race moves to Sunday hoping to jumpstart this night since the movie has been replaced with dramas. ABC will keep its 2-hour reality block on Monday. NBC will bring The Apprentice back during the first quarter when Sunday night Football concludes. The series remains a top performer but has dropped significantly since its initial season. The move

to Sunday, coupled with resting it for a quarter and the new venue, Los Angeles, may help to trigger a greater interest in the series. FOX will keep American Idol as a mid-season powerhouse as the series continues to deliver stellar ratings. Dancing with the Stars continues to be a top performer for ABC and will return for another sensational run.

The broadcast networks realize their limitations in not being able to program every night of the week. To this end both CBS and NBC will air encore runs of their top dramas on Saturday nights. They have both shifted away from movies and see the benefits of providing opportunities for viewers to catch up on their favorite show on the weekends. The CW will also repeat America's Next Top Model on Sundays.

Sports continues to be a small but significant part of the prime schedule. Monday night football moves off of broadcast TV to cable where it will air on ESPN. NBC gains a major sports franchise and will host the NFL on Sunday nights in the fourth quarter. This move will surely give NBC a needed boost as it exposes more viewers to its programming. ABC drops Saturday night movies in the fourth quarter and replaces it with College football.

For several seasons UPN was the source for quality programming geared towards African Americans. As the CW launches it will feature a program block geared towards this audience on Sunday nights. The CW should provide a larger platform for programs like Everybody Hates Chris and Girlfriends which were highly rated among African Americans, but not exposed to broader audiences. The two-hour block will run on Sunday's beginning at 7PM. One new series, The Game will join the returning Everybody Hates Chris, All of Us and Girlfriends. An encore of America's Next Top Model will follow at 9PM.

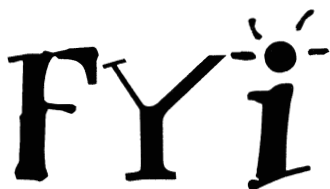
We should be concerned with NBC's decision to double run Deal or No Deal on two nights during the week. ABC learned the hard way with Who Wants to be a Millionaire that too much of a good thing can be disastrous. While the show is a top performer and produces impressive ratings, they don't want to turn viewers off by over saturating the schedule.

I'm excited about the season and I'd like to close by sharing my top picks with you. Happy viewing this fall! Shark, The Nine, Vanished, Kidnapped, Ugly Betty and 30 Rock. **MRCC**

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Strata's Market Profiler Product allows you to access information about your market's time zone, geography, sports, schools, and more. Contact Peter Nason at 312-222-1555, ext. 144 or pnason@stratag.com **Media Analysts** announces the syndication of The Home Edit/Brand Credits in January 2007. The application covers all endemic and non-endemic

categories. Media Analysts now provide Edit Credits service to most Beauty & Fashion publications as well as a large group of shelter publications **Scarborough** has completed delivery of all Release 1 2006 markets. Release 1 2006 national database, Scarborough USA+, will be available in early September **Simmons** announces the formation of their new on-line service: Simmons On-Line. Now Simmons can conduct survey research with an on-line panel and new studies that are category specific. Contact Jill Partner at jillp@smrb.com or 224-698-8158 **NSI** announces "Anytime Anywhere Media Measurement" or A2/M2. NSI will expand LPM to Seattle, Tampa and Houston **Arbitron** introduces eBook an interactive, electronic and full-color version of the Radio Market Report. Subscribers can download the entire book or just the portions they need. For a step-by-step guide to eBook, visit www.arbitron.com.

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FAX TO: JENNIFER RHODES

If you would like to fax us your lunch reservation, please fill out the information below and fax it to the MRCC reservation line at 312-278-6066 by August 3rd.

Name _____
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No shows will be billed — cancellations must be received 24 hours prior to meeting.

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