

# Study details live television's appeal

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Pennsylvania researchers say they've determined why people enjoy live television: They like the sense of indeterminacy, especially in sporting events.

The appeal of indeterminacy is so strong, sports play is usually suspended during commercial breaks so viewers may watch the action as it unfolds.

"Indeterminate consumption experiences (such as watching sports competitions live on television) unfold in ways that are not decided before the event occurs," explains Joachim Vosgerau of Carnegie Mellon University and colleagues. Indeterminacy is the unplanned part of the show -- it's the "Live" part of "Saturday Night Live," said Vosgerau.

"This seemingly subtle characteristic can help explain how people interpret many of their consumption experiences," the authors conclude. "Indeterminacy knowledge can alter people's experience utility in a variety of everyday consumption domains such as television, performing arts, vacations and gaming in ways researchers in marketing and psychology have yet to explore."

The study will appear in the March issue of the Journal of Consumer Research.

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