

The Quarterlife Dilemma: WWW Means World-Wide-Web

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Dylan--Quarterlife Story Teller. Credit: Quarterlife The Show

The Twenty-something twice-weekly drama, "Quarterlife The Show" is the first independent production to move to big time broadcasting. Its initial blockbuster appearance on MySpace and YouTube has waned recently. This article reviews some possible reasons.

The on-line twice-weekly situation drama show "Quarterlife," should be happy, but its not. It should make creators Marshall Herskovitz and Edward Zwick pretty much thrilled the show was picked up by NBC. The current eight minute web episodes will be edited into six one-hour formats and shown on NBC beginning in mid-February. As reported by the International Herald Tribune on December 23, 2007, "Quarterlife" has been on a downward slide since its first blockbuster Episode 1. So,

what happened?

The Story:

As some may know, sociologists and human development specialists have studied and written about the quarter-life crisis. It is a term that refers to that stage of life that follows adolescence, generally between the ages of 21-29. It is the younger companion of the mid-life crisis. Unlike its been there, done that mid-life companion, the quarter-life group are embarking on first real experiences.

In "Quarterlife The Show" the main characters are embarking on first career experiences in the arts-media industry. The narrator/writer Dylan is a twenty-something associate editor of a new age magazine Women's Attitudes. Dylan is attractive and has her degree, but finds herself running for coffee and dodging power plays in office politics more than living up to her title.

The theme is believable and her frustration is best expressed in her observation that while her generation may have been all geniuses in grammar school, for some reason the current job market did not get the transcripts. She is bored and decides to take it to the Web and begins video blogging her life on "Quarterlife." The rub comes in when she turns the video blog into a play-by-play analysis of her friends and room mates without asking their permission. Her rigorously honest assessments of her friends and room mates Debra, Lisa, Danny, Andy and Jed sets up "Quarterlife The Show."

Episode 14—What Happened to the Hits?

In preparing this story I went through as many of the episodes I could find with some difficulty. The problem is that quarterlife dot com has the current episode 14, but the rest of the full episodes are not archived

for easy reference. Instead, I went to YouTube where the first, second and other episodes can be viewed in their entirety.

In addition MySpace the place where the show initially premiered has clips of the show. The creators have a method and that is to utilize social networking sites to generate interest and ownership by viewers. A view of the credits demonstrate this is no garage production. It took a cast and crew of nearly 100 to produce this Web to TV show.

On the Quarterlife web site aspiring artists can contribute their work and the forum allows for comments on each episode In fact Quarterlife has developed its own form of social networking and set about to brand Quarterlife. The actors provide video blogs of their experiences and readers in turn can produce video blogs of their experience viewing Quarterlife The Show. It would seem the producers have thought of everything.

The show has received favorable comments around the world, but the recent episodes have not come close to the nearly 800,000 range of the first episode. One interesting discovery is the "related video" section of YouTube. In this section viewers are given recommendations by YouTube of other videos that are similar in kind and interesting. I noted the contribution by WuFather, "Exorcist Walk" had nearly 7 million hits. The video shows a woman crawling on her back making ghoulish sounds as a dog barked out of fear and loathing of the scene. Wufather is in his late 20s with a young family.

Quarterlife The Show is a YAVIS production. This acronym refers to the young, attractive, verbal, intelligent and successful. The show is about upper-middle class, white, college graduate characters embarking on life's excoteric journey. It's "Days of Our Lives", "Three's Company" and "The Big Chill" rolled into one. The problem with "Quarterlife The Show" is its lack of color and absence of humor. The success of "The

Office" is its diversity and humor about all things walking and crawling.

The other sticky note is that twenty-somethings have a whole lot to laugh about. There are at least five scam e-mails in every in box everyday. They were promised from an early age that all they had to do was show up and the earth would tilt 15 degrees. What American twenty-somethings have found is the absolute grind of having to produce enormous volumes of work at a horrendous rate just to approximate their international cohorts. Their cohorts weren't raise with the same expectations of the way life should be.

Demographically speaking, the world-wide-web is made up of tens of millions of users that graduated from the school of hard knocks. In addition they get bored with "What's It All About." Education comes in various forms and coupled with intelligence and creativity the Web moves on.

If you want to succeed on the world-wide-web, you need a band, an exorcist, some color and loosen up on the tight packaging format.

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