

ABC tries social network experiment with 'Revenge'

May 9 2012, By DAVID BAUDER , AP Television Writer



In this publicity image released by ABC, Emily VanCamp is shown in a scene from the May 9, 2012 episode of the ABC series, "Revenge." ABC is conducting an experiment for the season finale of "Revenge" with an app that makes it easier for viewers to conduct "second screen" activities like talking about the show on Facebook and Twitter. The network is interested in seeing if this might make more people watch shows when they air rather than on DVRs. (AP Photo/ABC, Colleen Hayes)

(AP) -- ABC and Yahoo will experiment on the season's last two episodes of "Revenge" with a smartphone and tablet application designed to encourage more people to watch television live.

There's an enticement, too. People who download and click onto the "Into Now" application during the May 16 and 23 showings of "[Revenge](#)" become eligible for a free summer trip to New York's

Hamptons beach area, where the drama's story is based.

The companies are trying to take advantage of the growing trend of multiscreen use, or people who spend time on their phones or [iPads](#) while the TV is on. Yahoo's "Into Now" app tries to make all of that easier.

"The world changed dramatically with all the smartphones and tablets," said Adam Cahan, vice president of "Into Now." "People are multitasking while they are [watching TV](#). We came up with a way of connecting that community."

When used, the app can identify what show a viewer is watching and immediately spot Facebook friends who are doing the same thing, Cahan said. It taps into Twitter feeds about the show, including those from actors and producers. Trivia and other details about the show are also readily available, he said.

"We know the finale is going to be big," said Victoria Chew, vice president of strategic marketing partnerships at ABC. "We know the story lines are going to be things that the fans are going to buzz about and talk about when it's over. We wanted to encourage fans to watch it live."

While most television is still viewed live, the rapid growth of digital video recorders usage and [video on demand](#) means many more fans are watching programs later than when they are aired on TV, and networks have a harder time measuring this viewership. It is considered a factor in a major ratings slump at the networks this spring.

The Nielsen company estimated that 44 percent of all U.S. homes with TVs had DVRs in April, up from 19 percent in September 2007. Nielsen said 8 percent of all [TV viewing](#) is now material recorded on DVRs.

So, for ABC other networks, anything that might encourage live viewing is considered worth a try. ABC is examining partnerships with companies that have technology similar to "Into Now," but it has no other agreements set, Chew said.

"We're really interested in learning more about the second screen-experience," she said.

For "Into Now," the ABC deal also provides an important marketing boost as it tries to establish itself in a growing marketplace.

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