

TV viewers with second screen, second sight

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More and more of us choose to watch television while using our smartphones and tablets. This second-screen viewing behavior often means that viewers are less engaged with the television programming and advertising than they would have been previously because there are the endless distractions of social media, for instance, on that second screen.

This change has been partly driven by the blinkered attitude of [television](#) companies to the evolving needs of their viewers. The companies, preoccupied with piracy and surveillance concerns have attempted to control content and information and to limit interaction to their official websites and to have linear programming schedules as their output. Consumers expect more and conventional broadcasting simply does not meet the modern viewer's demands. Viewers are not sufficiently gratified by the programmed content and constantly seek alternative and parallel media consumption opportunities.

Writing in the *International Journal of Mobile Communications*, researchers in Taiwan have looked at second-screen viewing behavior in the context of engagement with the "primary screen," the television and the implications for programmers and advertisers of this increasingly prevalent behavior.

Po-Chien Chang of the Department of Communications Management at Shih Hsin University in Taipei and Cheng-Yu Lin in the University's Department of Radio, Television and Film, explain that traditional television viewing has become a blended experience for many viewers. Some of that second-screen activity may well be related to whatever is being shown on the television at the time. For instance, people may well be discussing a live show, sporting event, or other programming on social networks while it is being broadcast. They may well be involved in gaming or other activities associated with that show. Alternatively, the second-screen activity may be entirely independent of the traditional broadcast.

"New features and behavior are emerging that create challenges and opportunities for attracting advertising revenues and viewer attention in the second-screen environment," the team writes.

Based on a survey of 562 television audience participants, the team has

identified four categories second-screen TV viewing behavior: control, enrichment, sharing, and participation. From an analysis of their data, they have developed an empirical model that integrates an understanding of audience motivation, media engagement, and second-screen behavior. From this model, they have found that [mobile users](#) who are motivated by [common interests](#) and social sharing tend to be more engaged with online activities while watching television. They also found that [second screen](#) users are often strongly immersed, if not obsessed, with their social connectivity experiences rather than any interactive features that a television program may have of its own.

More information: Po Chien Chang et al. The roles of motivation and media engagement in second-screen viewing experiences, *International Journal of Mobile Communications* (2020). [DOI: 10.1504/IJMC.2020.110838](#)

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