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3

TWITTER AND TELEVISION

Broadcast Ratings in the Web 2.0 Era

Michael Brouder and Robert Alan Brookey

On July 11, 2013, Mia Farrow tweeted a picture of herself and Philip Roth captioned, "We're watching #Sharknado." As Christopher Rosen has noted, the tweet was a hoax, but it blew up on the internet because of the humor inherent in the prospect that such a noted actress and author would be "watching a movie where Tara Reid and Ian Ziering fight tornado sharks" (2013, para. 3). Although Farrow's tweet was a hoax, as the *Hollywood Reporter* would observe, *Sharknado* was a trending topic among the industry, with Will Wheaton, Patton Oswald, Olivia Wilde, and Elizabeth Banks all tweeting about the SyFy cable channel movie (THR Staff, 2013). It would appear where this Twitter trend was concerned, Hollywood was not alone; Danny Sullivan tracked tweets for the show and observed, "at its peak, #Sharknado was doing 5,032 tweets per minute, which is about 84 tweets per second" (2103, para. 5). A high rate, but as Sullivan avers hardly a record. For the SyFy channel's purposes, however, *Sharknado* did not need to set any records. Paul Vinga, writing for the *Wall Street Journal's Money Beat* offered this observation about the *Sharknado* phenomenon: "(V)iewership came almost wholly from the buzz on Twitter, and that little frenzy is exactly what advertisers are looking for . . . which is simply the ability to capture the viewer's attention. Any company advertising during *Sharknado* hit on a mini-windfall" (2013, para. 4).

The twitter trending on *Sharknado* might have been as easy to dismiss as the movie itself, except for what would happen a month later. In August of 2013, Nielsen Media Research released data for the first time that seemed to address a question many television broadcasters had about a possible two-way causal influence between Twitter activity and television ratings (Finn, 2013). Although media and advertising executives were still reluctant to accept the data as fact, it was a seminal moment for legacy media. From the perspective of television broadcasters it was especially important, as all broadcast television networks have seen their steepest declines ever in households watching television across all dayparts (Carter, 2012). The current fragmentation of television viewership is also well documented (Webster, 2005), as is the exodus of traditional television viewers to alternative media, including streaming outlets such as Netflix, on-demand services, and DVR recordings (Pisharody, 2013). These new data, however, are the first of their kind from Nielsen, or any other source, that suggest that Twitter has become one of the top three factors for generating increased television viewership (Nielsen Holdings, 2013a).

Yet, a few months later, during the spring upfronts, major networks were extolling their plans to maximize audience engagement through content especially designed for Twitter (Poggi, 2014b). Indeed, in anticipation of the upfronts, advertisers were already suggesting that multiple data streams would inform the ad buys that they would make (Poggi, 2014a). Given the reluctant attitude that media and advertising executives had displayed a few months earlier, attitudes toward social media, and Twitter in particular, had changed significantly.

While Nielsen's data are intriguing, and clearly media companies see value in Twitter, there is little scholarly published work examining the relationships formed at the crossroads of legacy and new media. Because of the lack of research in the area of Twitter and its effect on television viewership, we will argue for an aggressive, scholarly study of social media, particularly Twitter. Indeed, it is Twitter's rapid growth as a communication and data gathering tool that is prompting Nielsen to create new measurement methodologies for the broadcast television industry. To provide the proper context, we will review the history of Nielsen's methodologies and the television industry's vocal opposition to the shortcomings in accounting for new media's influence on viewership. Next, we will consider the existing literature on social media's effect on television viewership. From there, Twitter's symbiotic relationship with television will be explored, particularly as a cross-promotion platform. Finally, we will identify critical issues that should be considered as the relationship between Twitter and television viewership evolves.

Television Ratings: A History

Well before the emergence of television as a medium in the early 1900s, the measurement of consumers of traditional media has been a fundamental tool for marketing, advertising, and programming decision makers. In the mid 1980s, media researcher Hugh Beville crafted an important source book on broadcast television and radio ratings, systematically breaking down the history of audience measurement beginning with radio in the

1930s, the emergence of television audience measurement, and then the measurement methodologies developed by several competing companies in subsequent years. Notably, he explored the history and emergence of no fewer than 14 qualitative research models established by competing research companies, as well as an outline of modern cable audience measurement (Beville, 1985). Perhaps the oldest, and most notorious, method involves the maintenance of viewer diaries. Beville outlines both strengths and weaknesses for this system, but in subsequent years since his book was published, weaknesses have been compounded. In fact, a recent longitudinal study released by the Council for Research Excellence has found that both the inaccuracies and biases of diary reporting are greater than was originally assumed (Marszalek, 2013).

In the face of fierce competition from US and European companies, Nielsen Media Research emerged victorious in its systematic drive for dominance in the television ratings marketplace by developing the *peoplemeter* (Buzzard, 2002). Peoplemeters expanded the capabilities of traditional household meters by allowing viewers to enter information about who was watching television at a particular moment in time. These meters were also expected to solve some of the problems associated with the older diary system. Yet, even the peoplemeters are a problematic means of measuring television viewership (Asaravala, 2004).

Ratings research was, and continues to this day, to be imperfect and occasionally biases emerge that gave an advantage to some and disadvantaged others. Because the peoplemeter system does a better job of measuring small, demographically targeted audiences, advertiser-supported cable networks are likely to be beneficiaries of skewed numbers. Both broadcasters as well as cable programmers felt this discontent with Nielsen. If peoplemeter data allow cable to compete more effectively with the major networks for advertiser dollars, it might ultimately have an impact on the kinds of programming appearing on television. The point is, not only does industry demand shape the nature of ratings data, but the availability of certain kinds of data can shape the industry too (Buzzard, 2002).

A study by Timothy Moreland (1995) noted the discontent with Nielsen research methodologies grew among both broadcasters and advertisers just prior to the emergence of widespread internet use by consumers. The results of Moreland's study indicated skepticism in Nielsen ratings by the respondents, but neither advertisers nor broadcasters felt particularly strong about the issue. This may have been because agencies and corporate advertising managers realized that there was no better system for ratings measurement than Nielsen. Consequently, because of Nielsen's monopoly on cash, distribution, and development, Nielsen staved off multiple attempts by emerging ratings measurement companies, and it remained the lone system for television ratings measurement. Recently, however, Rentrak Corporation has emerged as a notable competitor to Nielsen and has made inroads on the latter's monopoly of broadcast television station clients. Offering services for motion picture, television, and social media engagement measurement, Rentrak is used in all 210 markets nationwide across all four major network affiliate groups (Thomas, 2013).

Today's audience measurement technologies, developed by both Nielsen and other companies, provide more comprehensive data than ever, including digital set-top boxes that provide up-to-the-second ratings to information as well as methods of measuring DVR, online, and out-of-home use. Unfortunately, Nielsen's more recent efforts to advance measurement technologies to match the change in consumer viewing habits continue to be met with skepticism from advertisers and broadcasters. As more consumers began time-shifting their viewing habits with DVR technology, the traditional method of limiting ratings to original broadcasts was called into question, particularly by broadcasters who imagined an important segment of their audience was not being measured. A 2005 push by Nielsen to measure commercial ratings plus three days of DVR viewing was met with stiff resistance, this time from advertisers who pointed out Nielsen's inconsistencies in data amounted to buying on a currency with no intrinsic value (Lafayette, 2005). In spite of this resistance, Nielsen has not only continued to track DVR viewership, but has also rolled out new systems of measuring both streaming and mobile consumption; the company's recent association with Twitter is part of these new efforts.

With the seismic shift in the current media consumption landscape and the need for technological advances in how these audiences are measured, there also arose a call in academic circles for a broader definition of ratings analysis that includes new methodologies connected to new media consumption. Napoli (2012) notes traditional measurement services are adjusting their methods of capturing data in relation to changes in media usage, and other media companies and agencies are exploring new methods altogether to measure and monetize audience engagement. Ultimately, Napoli recommends new models for audience measurement that include a broader, multidimensional approach to media consumption; one that focuses less on audience behaviors, and more on the various methods in which an audience consumes media.

Social Media's Effect on Business

For businesses, the value of reaching mass audiences through social media, particularly Twitter and Facebook, is hard to ignore. As of this writing, 77 percent of Fortune 500 companies actively use Twitter, 70 percent use Facebook, and 69 percent use YouTube (Kerr, 2013). The rapid emergence of social media and other web-based technologies had caused dramatic shifts in traditional marketing and advertising. Adamson

(2008) has argued that these shifts, by and large, are not temporary, and companies need to develop long-term social media strategies.

As early as 2009, the extent of knowledge about social media, even an agreed upon definition of social media, was elusive. Given the growing focus that business executives place on the value of social media, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) aimed to better define the concept, as well as differentiate the term's use among similar concepts such as "Web 2.0" and "user generated content." They categorized sub-genres of social media based on high versus low levels of personal disclosure along with a high, medium, and low amount of "richness" or social presence within the medium. They saw the use of the internet and online communication taking on a more conversational, interactive mode of discourse. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) also offer suggestions to professionals with regard to the use of social media within their organizations' marketing strategies. Included in their recommendations are those geared toward how to use social media within a broader marketing scope, and others about navigating the nuances of social media communication. The article concludes with several insights on what to expect from social media in the immediate future, including the emergence of a "Mobile" Web 2.0.

For professional social media marketers, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) provided a good outline of different social media platforms and their uses. For scholars, this is an adequate primer on the basics of social media, but it lacks a broader recognition or a deeper analysis of the effect of all social media applications available at the time. This is evidenced by the almost complete omission of Twitter, reinforcing once more the need for continued academic research relating to Twitter's influence on business marketing.

Beyond being merely communication tools or forms of collective wisdom, social media are also considered entertainment. Ferguson and Perse (2000) drew comparisons between web surfing and television. Written at a time when internet use was rapidly increasing, the article ultimately queried if the web could displace television as a vehicle for information and entertainment. Through a uses and gratification study detailing the media use of 250 college undergraduate students, data were collected to gauge the participants' motivation for general web use, the kinds of television-related web activities in which they participate, and finally the extent of their "web repertoire." The authors concluded that the web and television competed when it came to free time and entertainment. However, where television ranks high on the scale of being a relaxing activity, computer use did not. The research of Ferguson and Perse serves as an early glimpse into perceptions and activities of web consumers at a time when internet speeds were much slower than they are today. A similar study of web use today, especially with the arrival of streaming services such as Netflix and Hulu, would likely bring different results; in part because streaming services and online downloading have been more readily deployed by the entertainment sector.

As noted above, social media have created a fundamental shift in the paradigm of media consumption. For example, Wiederhold (2012) observed that, in their infancy, social media served the purpose of a way for companies to "listen in" on consumer feedback. Today, however, Wiederhold observes a growing but fundamental shift within the context of social media influence, whereupon consumer opinion means far more than it used to. This is backed up with recent data on second-screen use, online viewing of advertising, and references to recent research in Germany and Japan, where the social and traditional media have a much more synergistic relationship. The article concludes with a warning that advertisers that fail to recognize this shift in power back to the hands of the consumer will do so at their own peril (Wiederhold, 2012).

In some ways, businesses have heeded this warning. Fischer and Reuber (2011) measured how the use of social media, particularly Twitter, benefitted and shaped the decision making of business entrepreneurs. The authors sampled multiple business entrepreneurs who have adopted Twitter in the previous two years, but who use a wide variety of tactics with the medium. The authors interviewed each participant and documented their Twitter use for a predetermined period of time before and after the interview. The authors concluded that Twitter, along with other social media channels, is valuable and offers entrepreneurs opportunities to advance their businesses goals. They go on to caution that businesses need to consider social media as more than a medium with which to communicate marketing messages, and need to expand and experiment within the medium. Finally, although the research was relatively recent, it is notable that the authors address the lack of scholarly research with regard to social media beyond that of being a marketing tool.

Aside from business entrepreneurs, Mangold and Faulds (2009) argue that social media, also referred to as consumer-generated media, need to be added to the list of traditional marketing techniques utilized by current integrated marketing communications (IMC) strategists. The authors supported this argument by citing several examples of notable recent social media efforts by big businesses across several social media platforms. The authors go on to contrast traditional media as a "one-way" versus social media's "multiple-avenue model," which affords a marketer many more ways to communicate. They note, however, that the unpredictability of social media is often a barrier for entry by many traditionally minded IMC strategists.

At this point it is important to ask that, if businesses and their marketing and advertising efforts are shifting toward the use of social media, are the consumers listening to their messages? Logan et al. (2012) gauged audience perception on the value of advertising messages

on social media sites compared to similar advertising messages on television. The authors used a slight variant from Ducoffe's Ad Value model for predicting a consumer's attitudes toward advertising, namely entertainment, informativeness, and irritation. An analysis of a 51-question poll sent to 500 social media and television consumers noted that entertainment was a key factor in assessing advertising value within social media. This is in contrast to television, where informativeness was a key factor. Although there were some limitations to the study, including a relatively narrow and small sample, it was interesting to note a difference in perception between persuasive messaging within the two mediums. The authors go on to suggest that media professionals should consider changing the tonality and content of messaging.

Amid the rapid emergence of social media and their effect on legacy media's long-standing advertising and marketing models, Collins and Brown (2012) outline how, within the new media landscape, traditional media outlets (specifically television stations and newspapers) have been slow to adapt to the new ways consumers seek and experience media. In their study, the authors compared the use of multimedia content in the daily operations of television stations and newspapers. Online and mail-in surveys were delivered to 1,000 newspapers and news-producing television stations nationwide. Results of the study reinforced the hypothesis that, regardless of market size, the legacy "attitudes" at local operations prevent traditional news media from actively changing workflow operations to bring their news content into new media applications. What makes this study noteworthy is that it reinforces legacy media's general reluctance to adapt and grow amid the expansion of social media and their growing influence on consumer behavior. Yet that reluctance appears to be dissipating where one legacy medium (television) and one social medium (Twitter) are concerned.

The Twitter and Television Relationship

Twitter is rapidly emerging as the social medium of choice for television media companies. In February 2013, Twitter spent \$90 million to purchase startup company Bluefin Labs, which combines television viewer data with Twitter user behavior metrics (Isaac, 2013). This, for many reasons, is very valuable information for advertisers, television programmers, and even Nielsen Media Research. Not surprisingly, eight months later, Nielsen and Twitter jointly announced the launch of *Twitter TV Ratings*, a measurement of total activity and reach of television-related conversations on Twitter (Nielsen Holdings, 2013b).

Recently, Twitter also made efforts to partner with television media companies directly. In the summer of 2013, Twitter introduced *Twitter Amplify*, a new advertising product for media and consumer brands, which allows streamed video links within tweets (Indvik, 2013). Another innovation, *See It*, is a joint effort between Twitter and Comcast that allows for greater interconnectivity embedded in Twitter posts published by Comcast-owned channels. For Twitter, the feature is another opportunity to promote itself as a destination for television conversation and as a partner to the networks (Stelter, 2013).

An undeniable draw for television companies toward Twitter lies in their immense number of users, and the potential to reach these users with engaging messages. As of July 2014, Twitter boasted over 250 million users (Weise, 2014), and the company offers access by which developers can define resources to identify and target these users. The Twitter application programming interface (API) allows code-savvy users the freedom to extract a myriad of valuable information from the "big data" gathered by a global Twitter user base. The amount of data can be overwhelming, but in the right hands can unlock a treasure trove of data for analysts relating to tweet popularity and user demographics.

Burgess and Bruns (2012) explored big data in the areas where social media and television overlap. While they did not address how mined data on Twitter can be incorporated into parallel analyses with traditional television audience measurement systems, the authors did begin to explore how current approaches to collecting social media data were beginning to be undertaken by more than just computer scientists. Burgess and Bruns (2012) coin the phrase "big social data" as a means by which to categorize the rapid growth of quantitative data associated with social media. The authors argued that this brave new world of social data mining was creating new modes of scholarship in media, communication, and cultural studies. Although Burgess and Bruns felt big data analysis was inherently a technical process, they called for a greater level of code literacy among those occupying roles in non-science fields. They suggest incorporating broad computer science coursework for students in media and communications studies to truly overcome the barriers for using Twitter data in media scholarship (Burgess & Bruns, 2012).

The ability to parse and analyze data at the scope that Twitter can offer brings huge opportunities to companies willing to make the investment in the process. As noted, there is vast potential in partnerships between Twitter and corporations eager to tap into the mountain of information from which to strategically communicate to their respective consumer base. In spite of the rapidly developing business partnerships between Twitter and television corporations, the actual study of the symbiotic relationship between television and Twitter use is scant. One study by Wohn and Eun-Kyung, however, discussed common perceptions regarding Twitter use while watching television programming. Of note, tweets were not part of a "conversation" per se, but more of a running commentary. Other findings include the fact that tweets tend to occur almost immediately following a dramatic moment in

the program, as opposed to a delay. Additionally, tweets tend to appear during commercial breaks, are indicative of personal engagement with the program, and generally include additional hashtags, retweets, and links. Another interesting finding includes the fact that 30 percent of the tweets came from mobile devices (Wohn & Eun-Kyung, 2011).

While their study notes that the dialogue relating to television among Twitter users is not technically a traditional call and response "conversation," television corporations are still eager to inject their product messaging into the commentary. Lin and Peña (2011) draw from existing scholarly works and recent conference notes to expand the current knowledge of television networks' brand messaging via Twitter. They then proceed to develop and outline resulting implications for brand managers. The authors categorized the tweets of nine television programs across multiple genres on the basis of being task-oriented or socio-emotional. The study also examined which tweets were retweeted more frequently as a measure of which kind of tweets are more influential. Lin and Peña conclude that, while television networks use Twitter for instructional messages, such as programming promotion, there is greater pass along value and overall influence with messages that are more social, such as opinions, jokes, and salutations. Not all television outlets have been adept at utilizing this medium, however. For example, Greer and Ferguson (2011) found that local television stations underutilize Twitter as a promotional vehicle for station programming, and they conclude that most non-public broadcasting stations use Twitter as news feed and seldom promote regular newscasts.

Beyond promotion, Harrington et al. (2012) further noted ways in which Twitter is reshaping television, from the ways audiences watch to the ways broadcasters produce programming with Twitter followers in mind. The authors also touched upon potential ways advertisers are benefitting from the synchronization of Twitter participation with live programming. In acknowledging the complexities of the relationship between television and social media, the authors attempt to identify and explore ways that television intersects with Twitter as a communication platform within the media sphere. The article concluded with a call for further dialogue regarding the symbiotic relationship between Twitter, television programmers, and the collective audiences they reach.

Additional Research/Additional Questions

The singular element that binds legacy and new media, particularly Twitter, is the battle for ad revenue. According to ratings historian Hugh Beville, effective mass communication requires a viable feedback system to report on how the media are being received, and the second is a strong financial structure, through subscribers, advertisers, or both (Beville, 1996).

Media, advertising, and audience measurement have always been closely linked, regardless of the fact that technologies and consumption of traditional media are changing. The $502 billion global ad spend market (Lunden, 2013) is shifting away from television and toward internet, and Twitter appears to be leading the strategic effort to leverage its data and consumer reach, through partnerships with Nielsen Media Research and big media companies such as Comcast.

Unfortunately, there is a noticeable gap in scholarly literature regarding the relationship between Twitter and television. A cursory online glance reveals an excess of television industry trade and consumer press relating to Twitter and its effect on consumer behavior, including television viewership, but most of it coincides with joint Twitter and Nielsen Media Research press announcements. Nielsen's causation study (Nielsen Holdings, 2013a) purports a direct correlation between Twitter use and TV ratings, yet there is no independent study, professional or scholarly, that supports or refutes this. The scholarly literature that does exist relating to new media's effect on television viewing is very limited. Most research in this area is isolated to either very broad topics, such as the internet's growing presence as an entertainment alternative (Liebowitz & Zenter, 2012), or is targeted to particular social media subsets, demographics, and/or programming (Logan et al., 2012). And although Ruth Deller's (2011) study shows some promise, her examples are often anecdotal and the scope of the study is limited.

Some of the reasons why there is a lack of independent, academic research on Twitter's influence on television ratings may also lie in the very nature of social media platforms. Beginning in 1997 with what is considered the first social networking site (SNS), sixdegrees.com, there were no fewer than 30 SNSs that launched before Twitter launched in 2006 (Ellison, 2007). This seems to be too small of a window to recognize the emergence of a dominant social media player, let alone conduct thorough research on a particular social media platform. To illustrate this further, current social media leader Facebook, with over three times the unique monthly visitors of Twitter, is currently seeing its popularity shrink among teens and young adults (Rodriguez, 2013). With the rapid rise and fall of SNSs, scholars may be asking if research on Twitter's relationship with television is long term. In addition, many of the developments that have integrated Twitter with Nielson and Comcast have happened within the last year. Given the lag-time of academic research and peer review publication, and the complex workflow of some academic journals and presses, it may be a while before the scholarly research on Twitter and television begins appearing in press. As this research emerges, we believe that there are some important issues scholars should consider.

First, we need independent and disciplined research to verify and test the claims that Nielsen makes in its 2013 causation study, with particular attention to the conclusions regarding Twitter activity and television

ratings. This independent verification is needed because both Nielsen and Twitter have a vested interest in these favorable findings. Nielsen is trying to answer the complaints of advertisers and broadcasters who believe the company is behind the curve where social media is concerned. Although it had a successful IPO (initial public offering), Twitter had been performing poorly with the exception of a profitable second quarter in 2014. Indeed, it could be argued that the Nielsen study, and buzz surrounding Twitter prior to the spring upfronts, may have contributed to this new success by placing the platform in a enviable position by tying social media to the revenue stream of traditional television advertising (Weise, 2014).

Second, do tweets signify active viewer engagement? One of the perennial complaints about traditional Nielsen ratings is that they seldom distinguish actual viewing from the use of television as background for other household activities. Tweets about specific programming content would seem to indicate a viewer who is actually watching the programming, but is this the type of engagement that benefits advertisers? For example, Pynta et al. (2014) conducted a study measuring brain activity of subjects who used social media (Twitter and Fango) while watching television. They conclude that their findings are in line with Nielsen's own regarding Twitter usage and viewer engagement, and suggest that "higher levels of program engagement also bode well for advertisers, with advertising spots also likely to receive boosts in performance" (p. 78). If, however, as Wohn and Eun-Kyung (2011) suggest, most of the tweets that signify personal engagement happen during commercial breaks, then more research is needed to determine if advertising messages actually benefit from Twitter. Indeed, it is possible that the personal engagement that Twitter inspires may be at cross-purposes with the commercial advertiser. In other words, these tweets indicating program engagement may also index commercial disengagement. Therefore, more research is needed before we can determine if Twitter is an advantage or disadvantage to advertisers.

Third, if tweets become the new ratings currency, then what type of programming motivates tweets? In their study of Twitter feeds used during the 2012 Eurovision Song Contest, Highfield et al. (2013) verified that special events programs, especially programming with a strong fan base, could allow broadcasters to use Twitter hashtags "in assembling, interacting with, and potentially also in tracking and analyzing live audiences around their programming . . . promoting live viewing and thus maximizing audience ratings and advertising returns" (p. 334). Buschow et al. (2014) have also observed that certain genres of television, specifically reality shows, stimulate more social media discussions. Therefore, it would seem that advantages of Twitter may be reserved for certain types of television programs, and those parameters need to be explored, identified, and demarcated.

For example, if, as Greer and Ferguson (2011) observe, opinions and jokes are more likely to be retweeted and thereby drive Twitter traffic and trending, then there is little wonder why *Sharknado* trended so well. In fact, many of the tweets on the program were disparaging comments and jokes, similar to those found on an older SyFy network program: *Mystery Science Theater 3000*. In other words, *Sharknado*, as a television program goes, was a big joke, and that is our point. If bad programming motivates more tweeting, and tweets become the currency, then how well does that bode for the future of television programming? More recently, the joke got even bigger with *Sharknado 2*, which not only set a new ratings record for the SyFy channel, but also "generated one billion (yes, with a 'b') Twitter impressions—about three times as many as its predecessor—making it television's most social movie ever" (Wood, 2014, para. 1).

Conclusion

Since its inception, the internet has been the catalyst for new and innovative ways to communicate, gather information, and seek entertainment. An inherent competitor to traditional media, online entertainment has resulted in a steady decrease in traditional, live television viewership. Concurrently, Twitter has emerged as one of the top social media tools worldwide, bringing together millions of users and providing them a way to network, communicate, and share ideas. It has essentially changed the public discourse in society, setting trends and influencing behavior. Instead of considering it an internet-created threat, however, big media companies are embracing Twitter and are now exploring a relationship that is mutually beneficial.

Although there is ample research available examining social media's effect on consumer behavior and select research on the overall effect of internet use on television viewing, there is a significant absence of independent research noting Twitter's ability to directly affect television viewing. The financial value of thoroughly understanding this information is immense. The data are crucial to the multi-billion dollar media marketplace and vital to the activities of broadcasting management, sales representatives, program producers, advertisers, and their agencies.

Obviously, a great deal of additional work is needed if we are to be in a position to recreate and confirm current television audience measurement methodologies, and synthesize that with research relating to an ever-changing new media platform such as Twitter. We have offered some tentative suggestions of how that research might proceed, and these suggestions also raise some concerns. Some have claimed that television has entered a new golden age and, in spite of all the "Real Housewives," there are characters such as Walter White, Patty Hewes, Don Draper, and Selena Meyer, all of whom would not have appeared on our sets ten or twenty years ago. Let us hope that the quality of character-driven television can gain the same Twitter traction of the joke that was *Sharknado* and *Sharknado 2*.

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