

Why is it that everyone is excited about programming every other medium, but I'm the only one excited about programming for HDTV ?

There are webisodes coming at us from every direction. [Vuguru](#) has done a great job with original programming for the web. Every cable and broadcast network it seems is doing companion programming on the web for their TV shows. Leverage the abilities of the PC and the net is an oft heard theme with content creators. And who can forget user generated content coming to us from every corner of the universe capable of everything and anything short of world peace !

There is original programming for phones and PDAs coming from every direction. [Discovery is doing 14 original](#) series as are any number of content creators. The programming is being designed for the features of the device it will be played on . Phone viewers can respond in any number of ways. Content can take advantage of features of the device OS, whether it be Zune , iPod or iPhone , whatever. They may be as simple as integrating cover art of CDs or full interactivity and interaction.

Then of course there is programming for compatible TV. What is compatible TV ? Its programming that without alteration , looks the same on any and every TV you play it on. A color episode of Gunsmoke will play back from a VCR, DVD or TIVO pretty much the same way as an episode of Heroes on Grandmas old console as it will on a brand new 50" HDTV . You never have to ask the question, "Will this work"

No one in the last 50 plus years has ever programmed content differently for different types of TVs. They programmed content "For TV"

That made sense in an analog world. It makes no sense to me in a digital world. Which is a key reason why we started [HDNet](#) of course.

But if I really think about TV these days, it actually makes more sense that traditional programmers program for compatible tv. Content creators have no choice but to do any differentiated programming on non TV platforms. Its about the economics.

There are [111.4 mm](#) TV Households as of 2007 . There are more [than 2.4 TVs](#) per household. Thats about 270mm TVs in this country. Every single one of those TVs is critically important to content creators. They need every viewer they can get in order to sell ads and subscriptions to their programming.

If they were to program to the unique features and capabilities of the 44pct of households that own 52.5mm HDTV owners and are capable of receiving an HDTV signal, they would be excluding the viewers of about 240 mm compatible TVs as revenue sources (remember, hdtv owners can own and get an HD signal on more than 1 set which is why the numbers dont seem to add up). In this era of fast forwarding through commercials and other attacks on traditional tv viewership, there is no company of any size that can afford to ignore 240mm TVs.

Except for HDNet.

Our business is built on on ONLY programming for those households that have HDTVs and receive HD signals. We create programming that takes full advantage of the widescreen, resolution, color palette, 5.1 or better sound, digital connectivity and more to make great original programming better. Which is why our viewers always tell us that our picture quality always looks much better than others

But this post isn't to brag about HDNet and HDNet Movies being the only 2 networks that program exclusively for HDTV. Its to get feedback on what type of programming works well on future HDTVs but not so well on compatible TV

HDTVs are much like PCs, they get bigger, better and cheaper year after year. This past year saw the biggest increase in the size of the average TV purchased, EVER . The size of the average HDTV is going to continue to grow.

So the real programming question is this.

What can you show on a 50, 60, 70" or larger screen that you cant show on a traditional, compatible TV ?

The first type of programming that came to our minds is music concerts. Music concerts have never worked really well on compatible TV. Even the biggest of names tend to disappoint in terms of number of viewers. Its easy to understand why. The fidelity of sound coming from your analog set, even if its stereo, is not going to be that great.

On the flipside, a music concert on a big screen ,with 5.1 sound, particularly if its connected through the digital output to a nice set of speakers (something hard to find from an analog set) can be a great home experience.

To take advantage of this unique differentiation, we licensed every great concert that we could find and continue to do so. . Then we devoted an entire day of our programming, Sunday to concerts. We have shot, created or licensed more than [150 concerts and I dont know how many more music shows](#) including our long running original [True Music](#) show and we play them all day, every Sunday.

That was the first step, what should be our next ?

What programming should be exclusive to HDTV viewers and not shown on regular TV ?