

Tipping Point Commentaries

A Web Tipping Point Waiting to Happen

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It is somewhat eerie to read that TV Guide is looking for the formula to make a success of watching the Internet.

from:

For Web TV, a Handful of Hits but No Formula for Success

By BRIAN STELTER

Published: August 31, 2008

When the [Writers Guild of America](#) strike stopped television production last fall and winter, Hollywood writers and producers rushed to create new scripted series for the Web, often called webisodes for lack of a more artful term. The strategy seemed simple: make money by going straight to the Internet.

Months later, they are realizing that producing Web content may be easy but profiting from it is hard. While a small number of writers, producers and actors are making a living with webisodes, they are still a long way from establishing the form alongside television and feature films. The newfound industry lacks clear business models and standardized formats.

Webisodes indeed! The lack of a more artful term about says it all, but that shot over the bow went unnoticed because the captains of industry were admiring their wake instead of focusing on their destination. The remainder of this article goes into rather labored breathing in its description of the same-old-same-old attempting to become new again.

Any Maven of the web would immediately list a crop of half a dozen premium links that lead to entertaining content that vastly exceeds the limited production runs cited in this article. However, the *formula for success* is already accounted for and reported here:

...“If your Web show has 35,000 people watching it, but all of those people are valuable to a certain advertiser, you can make good money from that show,” Dina Kaplan, a co-founder of the video site Blip.tv, said.

And we have one of those half dozen premium links at last.

There are two significant problems revealed by Mr. Stelter. They are inextricably linked with audience in terms of share and promotion. The traditional industry appears to attack along traditional lines: financing, production, and distribution. This is the easier part that has already been accomplished for a decade. The advertising placement, the digital production format, and the networked delivery have been long worked into a fine polish. Traditional production needs only ramp up, or in the terms of the web, they need to scale their product if that was the real problem.

It isn't, and that is where TV Guide and Nielsen are standing in the wings wondering how to translate their traditional methods into production promotion so that audience share can be boosted and bring them revenue. Clearly that would have happened if that model were viable. The next tipping point of the web is waiting for ignition.