



## Webseries, when the Internet finally challenges TV

A quick & optimistic analysis to understand the growing interest for web series,  
the new fresh format that might help studios.

By Don Tercio

## Webseries, when the internet finally challenges TV

Everything might probably end up on the internet: Google becoming the universal entry point, Facebook for personal stuff, Youtube for videos... and so on, this is a fact. Our lives are about to become half real half internetized, and the new "idiot box" will be our PCs.

Knowing this, TV studios & distributors are willing to migrate and conquer lands on the web. In this quest they've just discovered another trend to exploit within the net: web series.

New generations (Y & Z) are starting to pass more time in front of their laptops than watching TV, so it seems pretty obvious that retaining users & monetising net videos has become an obsession for those NBCs, ABCs or Disneys.

Videos that come and go from our PCs to PMPs, Smartphones, tablets and back... that we stream, download, rate, classify and add to our playlists... Now that Hulu & friends seem to have found a profitable business, the web series format provides the studios with the ultimate formula to connect with those new generations who are reluctant to watch telly and seem immune to any kind of advertising.



### Web-tv / New Media

Web series are like any other TV series with the only difference that they're not meant to be released on TV, but on the internet or mobile phones instead. The popularity of web serials is growing fast. At first it was mostly independent producers with low budgets and catchy ideas; unfortunately (like everything that succeeds) major TV production companies have already sank their teeth into this tasty market.

It probably all started with that first web soap called "[The Spot](#)" a webtv drama which ran parallel to the famous "Melrose Place" (for those of you who still remember it) and which apparently received over 100,000 hits a day.



Then, big video networks such as Youtube or Dailymotion appeared making it easy for people with ideas but without enough money, to distribute their original episodes through the net. [Lonelygirl15](#) or [Sam Has 7 Friends](#) (some of the pioneers) quickly acquired audiences in the millions and even secured sponsorship deals or Emmy nominations.

The real Boom came from the States a pair of years ago: Web series started to pair up with social actors such as [Bebo](#) or [Myspace](#) as a way to generate audience and attach adolescents to their beloved networks (especially Myspace who doesn't stop bleeding users against Facebook).

During these two years as the quality and importance of this format keeps growing (rivaling shows on network TV) big studios and well known producers haven't stopped releasing web-series all around.... NBC behind [Gemini Division](#), WB behind [Sorority Forever](#), MTV behind [WWJ](#), Microsoft behind [Cinemash](#) or [Kirill](#) (also now behind The Guild or Horror), Marshall Herskovitz (producer of Traffic or Blood Diamond) now behind [Quarterlife](#)..... and the list goes on.

We can start calling it by its name: the web television industry, which has now its own "[Streamy awards](#)" and also an [International Academy](#)!

### What it represents...

\*Internet TV is now professionalised, online video studios like [DECA](#), [60 Frames](#), [Watchmojo](#)... They all use Moore's Law and low-cost distribution over the Internet to disrupt the studio model, in the process building audiences that can rival a small cable channel.

\*New Media ("serialized entertainment with interactive ambitions") has been adopted faster on the internet than on TV (web series are the best example), and if those old idiot boxes don't popularize the Yahoo & Facebook applications & convince people to start using the internet outside their PCs.... Then the TV industry will go through hard times.

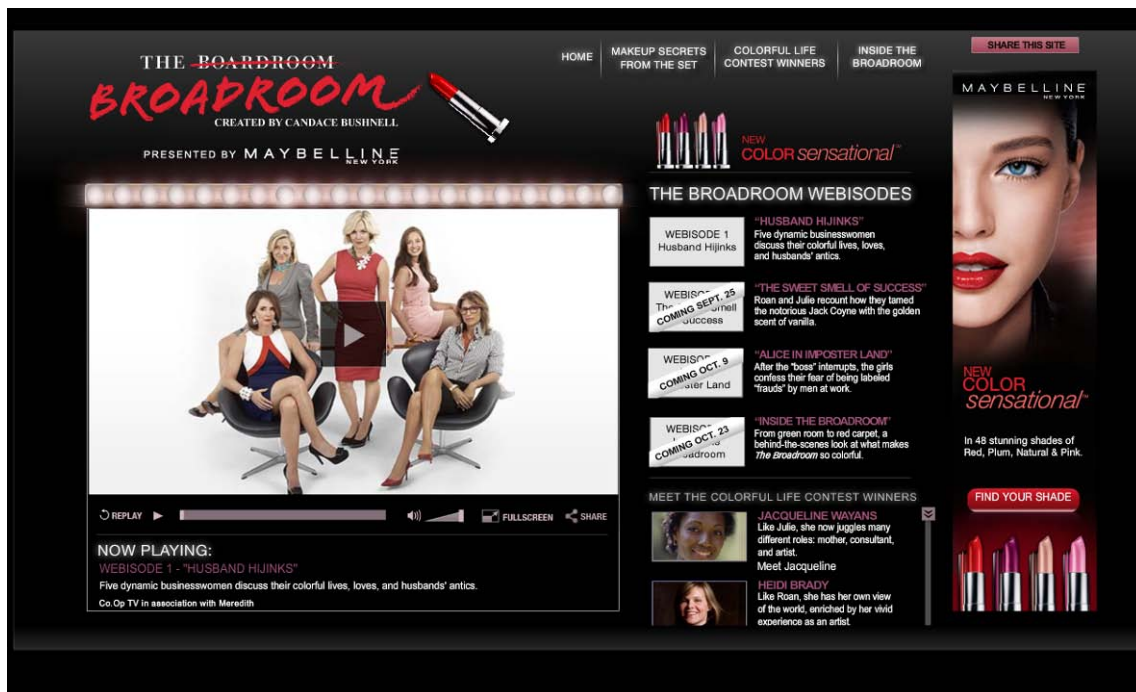
\*That's why traditional big studios like [Endemol](#) are moving quickly into this industry. Producing TV series is becoming hard and painful for big studios. On the other hand everyone wants and needs a web series: Endemol doesn't stop signing partnerships with Virgin, Myspace, Microsoft...

\*Big ad contracts... Kia, Lexus, Neutrogena, Maybelline, H&M, Microsoft Games...they have all signed interesting deals to appear exclusively as show's sponsors on the websites (and many more to come).

\*Niche audiences are better audiences... Except for those big hits like [Fred](#) (nearly 24mill month views), [Smosh](#) (11M) or [Red vs Blue](#) & [The Guild](#) (around 7M each), the rest of the web series hardly pass the million cap and don't seem to find big audiences. But one of the main reasons (apart from low budgets) is that more niche shows are popping up to appeal specific communities. Meaning that if you want your



ads to reach modern women you'll partner up with "[The Boardroom](#)" (which premiered yesterday), for reaching gay community you'll go for "[In the Moment](#)", or if you're looking for Mormons you'll sign up with "[The book of Jeremiah](#)"....



\*Regain the audience: Lately TV channels like NBC or SyFy have also decided to produce web series as a way to complement their original TV series. The Office or Battlestar Galactica for example have their own on-line sub products in the form of webisodes: [Blakmail](#), [The Resistance](#), Face of the Enemy... In most cases these web series come to fill in the gap between seasons, telling parallel stories about secondary characters; so fans stay loyal to the series and get reminded about coming back to TV for more.

[Steps for how to make a successful \(at least Streamy Nominated\) Web Series...](#)



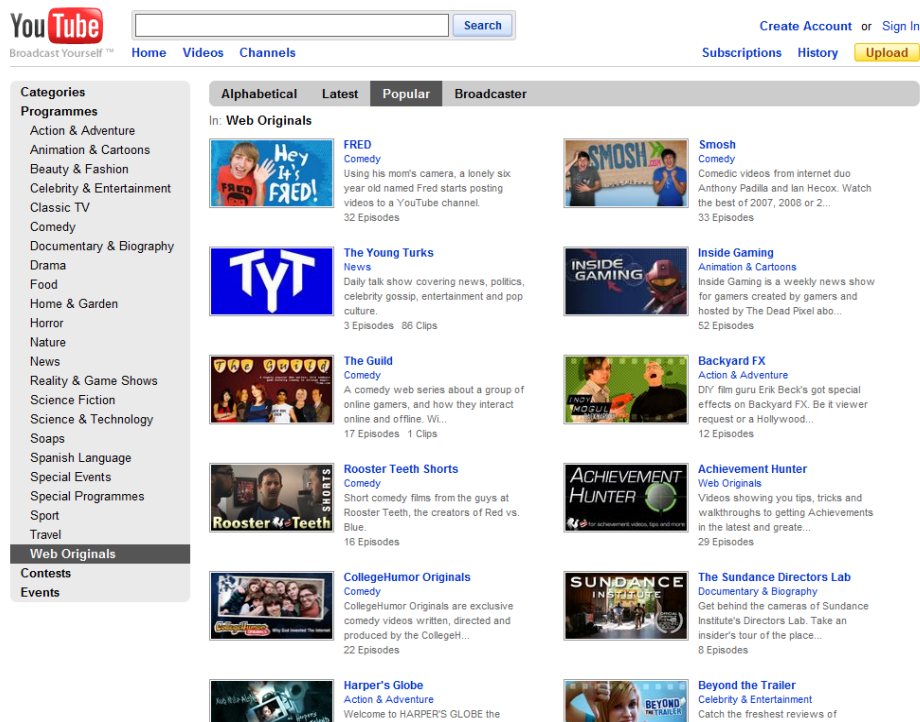
## Golden format?

Ok so maybe we're reaching that point where "You can't just throw \$500,000 with a nice Web series & site and expect that to be a business" as Scott Roesch (general manager for Atom.com, a portal from Viacom) says.....

... because let's admit that producing a successful web series is getting more and more like producing prime-time successful TV series. Microsoft's Kirill casted British actor, David Schofield ("Gladiator," "Pirates of the Caribbean," "Valkyrie") and it was nowhere near a cheap production.

Then you face the problem of having your series showed all around the internet.... The audience might get lost. Dozens of websites are competing to show these 2 – 6 min episodes. Much of the potential viewing data remains private and disaggregated, which is a shame for the community, studios & advertisers....

Youtube, who launched a pair of months ago its category "Web Originals" under the "Shows" section, has passed from only 14 web series (only partners) to more than 50 titles including some of the hottest and most famous right now... The Guild, Web Therapy, Promo Queen...



The screenshot shows the YouTube homepage with the 'Web Originals' category selected. The featured series include:

- Hey It's Fred!**: Comedy. Using his mom's camera, a lonely six year old named Fred starts posting videos to a YouTube channel. 32 Episodes
- The Young Turks**: News. Daily talk show covering news, politics, celebrity gossip, entertainment and pop culture. 3 Episodes 86 Clips
- The Guild**: Comedy. A comedy web series about a group of online gamers, and how they interact online and offline. Wl... 17 Episodes 1 Clips
- Rooster Teeth Shorts**: Comedy. Short comedy films from the guys at Rooster Teeth, the creators of Red vs. Blue. 16 Episodes
- CollegeHumor Originals**: Comedy. CollegeHumor Originals are exclusive comedy videos written, directed and produced by the CollegeH... 22 Episodes
- Harper's Globe**: Action & Adventure. Welcome to HARPER'S GLOBE the
- Smosh**: Comedy. Comedic videos from internet duo Anthony Padilla and Ian Hecox. Watch the best of 2007, 2008 or 2... 33 Episodes
- Inside Gaming**: Animation & Cartoons. Inside Gaming is a weekly news show for gamers created by gamers and hosted by The Dead Pixel abo... 52 Episodes
- Backyard FX**: Action & Adventure. DIY film guru Erik Beck's got special effects on Backyard FX. Be it viewer request or a Hollywood... 12 Episodes
- Achievement Hunter**: Web Originals. Videos showing you tips, tricks and walkthroughs to getting Achievements in the latest and great... 29 Episodes
- The Sundance Directors Lab**: Documentary & Biography. Get behind the cameras of Sundance Institute's Directors Lab. Take an insider's tour of the place... 8 Episodes
- Beyond the Trailer**: Celebrity & Entertainment. Catch the freshest reviews of

Dailymotion is no stranger to this format distributing successful titles like Ten Sundays, The Overthinker, Prop 8....

And to complete a long list of video networks and websites you can also find blip.tv, koldkast.tv, babelgum.com, lstudio.com, channel101.com ..... Many times showing the same web series orientated to the same public.



## Phenomenon?

Simple, brilliant & highly creative plots which exploit the latest social and technological web trends with no more than a few thousands of Euros might become the next web hit...

[The Guild](#) started a pair of seasons ago and it now has more than 6million streamed views per month, not bad considering it's only a web product (knowing that many other web series don't even get a few hundred...) and that it has "officially" become the image of all web series.

Overseas several countries & (mostly) local TV channels are also producing their own web series, especially in Europe. BBC launching [Proper Messy](#), Nolife (France cable channel) behind [Noob](#), Telecinco (Spain) behind "[Becari@s](#)" and so on.

The Buzz and interest is so intense that celebrities are also building their own projects. Lisa Kudrow (Friends) is behind "[Web Therapy](#)", a comedy about a therapist with limited patience for other people's problems. We can also find Jon Heder (Napoleon Dynamite) who stars "[Woke Up Dead](#)" and debuts next month, Neil Patrick Harris, Michael Cera.....

If you're not still convinced about leaving your plasma TV for a PC or Laptop it's because you probably have a big leather sofa and a TIVO subscription. Go and tell that to the millions of adolescents who want to watch different than their parents.

And to end our first report here are 3 webisodes from web series we find veeeeery appealing...

### [Web Therapy, Gossip Girl \(1 of 3\)](#)



[Kirill's first episode](#)



[The Guild Ep4S01 – Cheesybeards \(when they first meet\)](#)



More info?

<http://newteevee.com> <http://news.tubefilter.tv/>

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