NIELSEN: SOCIAL MEDIA USE CONTINUES TO RISE

177M REACHED WEEKLY BY SOCIAL MEDIA

From the telegraph to orbiting satellites, people have found ways to make their voices and opinions heard. That desire to be heard has been demonstrated in the last 10 years with the rapid rise in social media use. Now, consumers have a platform to break news, start dialogues and share opinions about content.

The increasing and significant role social media plays in consumer’s lives is revealed in Nielsen’s new 2016 Social Media Report. The report points out that smartphones are in the hands of 87% of the adult population of the U.S., and about 177 million people were reached by social media in an average week in the third quarter of 2016.

When compared to the same quarter in 2015, the report found a +36% increase in social media consumption by adults 18+, up to 22% of the population. Women spend 25% of their media time with social media, while Hispanic adults spend nearly 23%. African American adults spend 6 hours and 10 minutes per week, the most of any consumer demographic.

With the increase in social media consumption, and the growing use of tablets and smartphones, there’s a natural overlap with other media, including TV. The report found that 21% of tablet users said they use their device while watching TV “several times a day”, while 30% of smartphone users have the same habit.

Many consumers are using social media to communicate about their media consumption and what they’re watching on TV. An analysis in the report leveraging Nielsen Social insights found that there were 14.2 million social media interactions about TV on Facebook and Twitter on an average day in the U.S. this past fall.

Sundays were the biggest day for TV interactions across all platforms. Viewers took to social media to talk about NFL games, specials and Sunday series. Facebook logged 43% if its TV activity on Sundays, while Twitter had 33%. Saturday, with college football and MLB, was the next busiest day for TV interaction on Facebook.

Sports were by far the most popular topic in November with 71% of Facebook TV activity related to sporting events. Interactions about series came in at 18% during the same period. The report says that each new episode of AMC’s The Walking Dead generated 3.2 million interactions across Facebook and Twitter this past fall, while Empire on Fox had 1.1 million.

Consumers are using social media more and more to share responses and opinions, and social media platforms are evolving to be more than just a marketing opportunity. The networks are pivoting to become media distributors as well, delivering audience reach, advertising ROI and content delivery.

ADVERTISER NEWS

Fiat Chrysler reported a corporate profit of $1.9 billion for 2016, way up from just $100 million in 2015, when restructuring and recall costs ate up the bottom line. North American unit sales were down to 2.6 million last year, off about 100,000 from 2015…..

Ford’s net income was $4.6 billion last year, but that was down about 38% due to an accounting change involving employee pensions. The company noted it has less inventory in the pipeline now than it did last year at this time, as a year ago it had been building up inventory for some upcoming product launches. General Motors will report its numbers on February 8…….While much of the quick-serve segment of the restaurant business is struggling, Arby’s has been on a hot streak for the last few years. Same-store sales were up 3.1% in the fourth quarter and 3.8% for the year as its string of positive reports reached 25 quarters. The chain added 60 more locations last year, the first increase in unit count since 2008…….Another restaurant winner right now is Captain D’s, which had its 21st consecutive positive quarter at plus-1.3% completing a year of 2.3% systemwide same-store growth. The chain added 13 more locations last year to reach 518, and has deals in place to open 25 more this year…….Chili’s company-owned same-store sales fell by 3.3% while franchisees did a bit worse at minus-3.5%. Sibling Maggiano’s Little Italy was down a less severe 0.8%…….Ethan Allen comp store sales were down 4.5% for the fourth quarter, although the CEO called that “decent…despite very tough previous-year comparisons and a challenging retail environment”……ebay reported a 3.1% increase in revenue for the holiday period. What’s notable about that is the company returned to TV advertising in the period after not using the medium for the 2015 holiday season…….There should be plenty of inventory available at appliance retailers right now—the Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers says factory shipments of white goods were up 8.5% in December to 6.4 million units, the second-highest gain for a month last year behind just November. Washers and dryers showed the biggest year-to-year gains…….Most of the major regional banks have been showing increases in outstanding loan balances and Columbus-based Huntington Bancshares followed suit reporting a 37% increase in commercial and industrial loans and a 17% bump in automotive loans. Profit rose 19%…….AT&T total revenue dipped in the fourth quarter as it lost another 67,000 postpaid wireless subscribers. The traditional TV services DirecTV and U-verse lost 27,000 customers but as we reported earlier the new DirecTV Now added 200,000 in December.
CABLENET CHATTER

Freeform announced the start of production on its new scripted comedy pilot Brown Girls, a multi-camera series from writers Shilpi Roy and Nastaran Dibai. The plot centers on the relationship between Rimmi (Hina Abdullah) and Devi (Punam Patel), two young women that instantly clash over different views on modern life and love. The Brown Girls’ cast also includes Omar Maskiti (Better Call Saul) as Shaan. Young & Hungry has picked up an order for 10 additional episodes from Freeform, bringing the total number of episodes for the fifth season to 20. Young & Hungry was the number one ad-supported cable comedy for the summer of 2016 among adults 18-34, with season 4 posting year-to-year demo and viewer growth. Freeform recently announced that a spinoff of Young & Hungry would not move forward. Sundance TV will air all 24 episodes of the final season of The Mary Tyler Moore Show in tribute to the late actress. The event will start at 6 AM (ET) tomorrow.Spike TV will premiere Time: The kaleif Browder Story on Wednesday, March 1st at 10 PM (ET). The series documents the ordeal of a 16-year-old Browder, who was picked up by the police on charges that were eventually dropped. As a teenager, Browder spent more than 1000 days in the infamous Riker’s Island prison and endured more than 30 court dates. Music mogul Shawn “Jay-Z” Carter is an executive producer of the project and has an on-camera presence as well. New cast members have been added to the Discovery Channel production of Manifesto. Mark Duplass, Jerry Bobb, Lynn Collins, Katja Herbers and Brian F. O’Byrne will join Paul Bettany and Sam Worthington in the series about Ted Kaczynski, also known as the Unabomber. The news follows the recent announcement that Jane Lynch has been selected to portray former U.S. Attorney General, Janet Reno. Manifesto is from Kevin Spacey and Dana Brunetti’s Trigger Street and is written by Andrew Sodroski. Rouge is returning to Audience Network for its fourth and final season. The season premiere is set for Wednesday, March 22 at 9 PM (ET). Rouge stars Ashley Green and Cole Hauser. The Science Channel will debut Hacking the Wild next month. The program is described as the newest kind of survival show that features “digital survivalist” Andy Quintero hacking and engineering his way back to civilization from remote parts of the world using nothing but a backpack full of everyday technology. The six hour-long episodes of Hacking the Wild debut on the Science Channel, Wednesday, February 15th at 10 PM (ET). Former LSU head coach Les Miles has signed on to contribute to the coverage of college football’s National Signing Day. Miles will join Matt Schick, Joe Tessitore, Tom Luginbill and a host of other commentators as the ESPNU Signing Day Special Presented by Nissan airs on Wednesday, February 1st. The special will also air on ESPN2, and specialized programming will air across the Longhorn Network, SEC Network, ESPN3, ACC Network Extra and ESPN.com. The 12th annual event provides the latest news and information on college team’s recruiting classes as top recruits make their announcements.

SUPER BOWL BLACKOUT?

Is it possible a retransmission consent dispute could actually black out the Super Bowl for FiOS subscribers in a top-100 market? Usually, retransmission consent battles that start on New Year’s Day get settled before serious football games get played, but FiOS subscribers in the Syracuse market already have missed the NFC Championship and right now prospects for the Super Bowl appear to be bleak.

As usual, each party blames the other for being unreasonable. Bristlecone Broadcasting’s Fox affiliate WSYT says “Verizon has made a choice not to have Fox programming on their system.” Verizon says the station has asked for a 93% increase in fees, after a short blackout between the station and Verizon was settled two years ago. Syracuse.com reports that Bristlecone parent Northwest Broadcasting also has some retransmission consent blackouts going in smaller markets in Mississippi and Idaho.

FiOS subscribers who wish to watch the game may want to brush up on their Spanish. FiOS carries Fox Deportes which will broadcast the big game en español.

THIS AND THAT

We’ve seen several reports lately about automakers and other manufacturers making announcements about upcoming tie-ins with Amazon’s Echo, the wireless speaker and virtual digital assistant that has been supported with TV advertising before the holidays. This Week In Consumer Electronics says the device was “the belle of the ball” at the Consumer Electronics Show earlier this month, and has already found a place in more than 8 million U.S. homes since introduction in 2014. Helped by its television exposure consumer awareness jumped from 47% at the end of 2015 to 82% at the end of 2016. Consumer Intelligence Research Partners co-founder Josh Lowitz commented, “Amazon’s efforts to promote the expanded Echo line appear to have paid off. With traditional media advertising and prominent placement at the Amazon website, Echo product awareness among Amazon customers continued its rapid ascent in the fourth quarter of 2016.”

FORD CREDIT INVESTS IN DIGITAL BUYING

Ford Motor Credit Company has invested in financial tech company AutoFi and announced a new platform that will allow customers to purchase or finance a new Ford vehicle in minutes—“right from a dealership website or anywhere, on any device.” The AutoFi platform can be used now at Ricart Ford in Groveport, Ohio, and will roll out over time to more Ford and Lincoln dealerships across the United States.

Ford Credit notes that 83% of Americans said in a Harris Poll that they would like to spend less time at the dealership as possible when shopping for or buying a car. However, many still want to touch and feel their new vehicle before signing on the dotted line. “The new platform provides the best of both worlds,” said the announcement.