

TV IS THE FUTURE-AND THE 2014 MIDT WILL PROVE IT

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Netflix proudly proclaims that '[i]nternet TV is replacing linear TV. Apps are replacir remote controls are disappearing, and screens are proliferating' <http://ir.netflix.com/view.cfm>. IBM disparages 'Massive Passives ... in the living room ... a "lean back" mo consumers do little more than flip on the remote and scan programming.' By contr valorizes and desires 'Gadgetiers and Kool Kids' who 'force radical change' because 'anywhere, anytime content' <https://www-935.ibm.com/services/us/imc/pdf/ge510-tv-full.pdf>.

Without denying the substantial change brought about by the spread of digital tech deregulation, I challenge the universalizing claim that broadcast, cable, and satellit are over.

The evidence of television's demise is as sparse and thin as the rhetoric for it is cop thick. Historically, most new media have supplanted earlier ones as central organs or pleasure: books versus speeches, films versus plays, singles versus sheet music. all of them. A warehouse of contemporary culture, it merged what had come before is merging with personal computers (which were modeled on it) to do the same <http://www.economist.com/node/7995312>. The *New York Times* presciently announce tendency over thirty years ago with the headline "Television Marries Computer" <http://www.nytimes.com/1983/03/27/books/when-television-marries-computer-by-gardner.html>.

Television's robust resilience is especially true when it comes to current affa 49 population watches TV news, which for years has remained their principal r ce



Obama, however, took a multi-million dollar package across the stations then owned by NBC (Anglo broadcast), CNBC (business-leech cable), MSNBC (news cable), CNN (entertainment cable), Oxygen (women's cable), and Telemundo (Spanish broadcast). In the lead-up to the march, not in retreat: on election night 2008, CNN gained 109% more viewers than the equivalent evening four years earlier <http://adage.com/article/news/olympic-deal-s-makes-5-million-buy/129853/>; <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/08-big-headlines-everybody-124988>.

The 2012 US Presidential election was again a televisual one. How many US residents watched the debates between Mitt Romney and Obama preferred the internet to TV as their source? 3%. How many watched on both TV and the internet? 11%. How many people posted their reactions online? 8% <http://www.people-press.org/2012/10/11/one-in-ten-does-not-watch-the-presidential-debate/>.

In Europe as well as the US, TV rules the roost by a long way when viewers seek news. <http://www.broadcastingcable.com/news/washington/survey-tv-remains-top-news-source-129847/>; <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Reuters%20Institute%20Digital%20News%20Report%202014.pdf>. Worldwide, mobile devices such as iPads are the keenest consumers of television news worldwide. These tablet devices are adjuncts, gadget partners, to the main source. If anything, they stimulate people to watch television <http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/worldnews/news-consumption.html>.

Of course, change is afoot, as Lynn Spigel explained a decade ago:

'[I]ncreasing commercialization of public-service/state-run systems, the rise of multiplatform cable and global satellite delivery, multinational conglomerates, Internet convergence, changes in regulatory policies and ownership rules, the advent of high-definition TV, technological changes in screen design, digital video recorders, and new forms of media competition as new forms of programming ... and scheduling practices ... have all transformed the way we call watching TV. This does not mean all of television is suddenly unrecognizable—its familiarity and habit continue to be central to the TV experience—but it does mean that television's past is recognizably distinct from its present' http://static.squarespace.com/content/5101f04fe4b0527bec6f8a55/t/51a77046e4b061864c3b19f4/1369927750768/LynnSpigel_TV'sNextSeason.pdf.



As intimated earlier, the signs are that the internet will merge with television, and technologies will transform one another. In the words of Steve Ballmer, Microsoft's executive, 'we will see TVs become more sophisticated and more connected. The bond between the PC and the TV will dissolve' <http://www.smh.com.au/news/technology/not-tv/2009/01/09/1231004268540.html>.

Television 'seems designed, no matter what its platform of delivery, to generate new ways of being-t apart' <http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415509794/>. In Horace Newcomb's view, 'the future will be essentially the same as its past' via 'strategies of adjustment' to change <http://flowtv.org/2014/things-change/>.

TV remains the dominant source of our truth and object of our consumption, in dual senses—the set we spend more time with than other devices. All in all, there simply isn't evidence that newer technologies are displaced or are displacing the traditional cultural *bodega* of the last half-century. Media influence of the coming midterms will be all about TV. Sorry, Netflix. Apologies, IBM. Maybe next time.

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