

# UXTV2008: Social TV workshop

## Building on The Results of One-Screen Interactivity

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### ABSTRACT

- Social TV models that anticipate bringing elements of the current (and possibly next-) generation of web-based social networks to a single-screen UI on the (HD)TV display can build on the proven successes of one-screen interactive application deployments by US cable and satellite operators.

### General Terms

Management, Measurement, Design, Experimentation,, Human Factors,

### Keywords

Interactivity, ITV, ETV, Social Networks, Cross-Platform Services

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The issues with successfully bringing social networking elements from the web are notable and many. From input devices to authentication and group dynamics (“*who’s friend recommended this show?*”) - it is easy to envision a good deal of trial and error on the way to possibly discovering that the presence of a social network “address book” (let alone the concept of “Presence” itself) is A Good Thing - and additive to existing TV watching behaviors.

## 2. How it started – 2 screen interactivity

With research showing that a considerable percentage of TV viewers already watch TV while either using their laptop computers<sup>1</sup> or while texting on a mobile (smart) phone, there is credible evidence that viewers want to communicate with friends while watching TV.

## 3. How it evolves – 1 screen interactivity

The augmentation of TV watching with one-screen interactivity (using a remote control) has been proven to increase audience participation by double-digits<sup>2</sup>. The conclusion (TWC) we reached is that not only do people like the convenience of using

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.blinkx.com/article/blinkx-research-uncovers-modern-british-viewing-habits-reveals~649>

<sup>2</sup> Metrics from TWC’s 2006 – 2007 Navic-powered voting & polling trials with NBC, Bravo & MTV Networks programming. NBC internal data pegs 2 – screen (mobile and/or web) at an average 3 to 10% participation rates. TWC’s internal # averaged between 17 to 25% participation rates for viewers of these shows.

their remote to interact with the TV (even though it is a less-sophisticated input device than a mobile phone or a PC), but that 1-screen interactivity can benefit the User Experience of watching TV in ways we’ve only begun to explore.

## 4. What can interactive TV learn from the social web?

That some people are inclined (if not extremely interested) to share content (text, pictures, animations, video, apps, etc) within their family, their circle of friends and their extended social networks.

## 5. What are some of the challenges in developing and implementing social TV? How can they be addressed?

Social elements layered on top of TV viewing must be “lightweight” (in attention required, in graphic real-estate on the screen, and in time-span on screen) - but this should not preclude the sharing/syndication of playlists or FOAF content recommendation beyond simple “thumbs up” and “thumbs down” rankings. If there is a sense that the value of the user/viewer’s social network (and extended social “crowd”) is in the collective knowledge that can be harnessed for the challenge of Recommendation and Discovery of content, then we’ve identified another potential benefit of Social TV on a major challenge to the overwhelming amount of viewing choices in an “Everything On Demand” future.

## 6. How can social TV concepts move from the prototype stage to actual products in viewers’ homes?

First - we at Time Warner Cable have been deploying both bound & unbound interactive TV services like voting & polling, active advertising, Football & Baseball Trackers, eBay on TV, and many other apps since 2005. Our past experience with the process of development, integration and testing ITV apps is both applicable and extensible to the future of social TV services.

Secondly, it will take the alignment of an elegant UX model with a defensible business model for bringing social TV into the network - not to mention both successful prototyping/trials and leadership.

## **7. What is the future outlook of social TV?**

My sense is that the future looks positive, as the promise of “playlist portability” between devices emerges – this is one way a social TV network could serve as a proxy or surrogate for the “communal viewing experience” and add value to the challenge of finding the best content amidst a sea of choices.

## **8. ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Will Kreth is currently the Sr. Director of Advanced Video, Corporate Strategy for Time Warner Cable. Previously: director

of ITV & Interactive Services for Time Warner Cable, senior director at Prodigy; co-founder of both HotWired and Wired; Helped launch Time Warner’s 4th U.S. Road Runner deployment in Portland. Founder of media personalization software company Lifeset.com; developed interactive television titles at PF. Magic in 1991, worked with technology researchers at the Apple Multimedia Lab. In addition to having founded a former chapter of the ACM-SIGCHI in Portland, ME in 1998, he is an advisory board member to the Austin Music Foundation, Publik Music On Demand, Critical Metrics and is a member of the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences (ATAS).