



Television

The Power of Visual Culture



The Convergence of Television

In the past, TV networks made or bought almost all TV shows, which aired at set times.

Today, original shows are also produced by cable channels and Internet services like Netflix and Hulu, and are frequently viewed days or weeks after the original air date.



CATV—Community Antenna Television

- CATV

- First small cable system
- Originated where mountains or tall buildings blocked TV signals

- Two big advantages

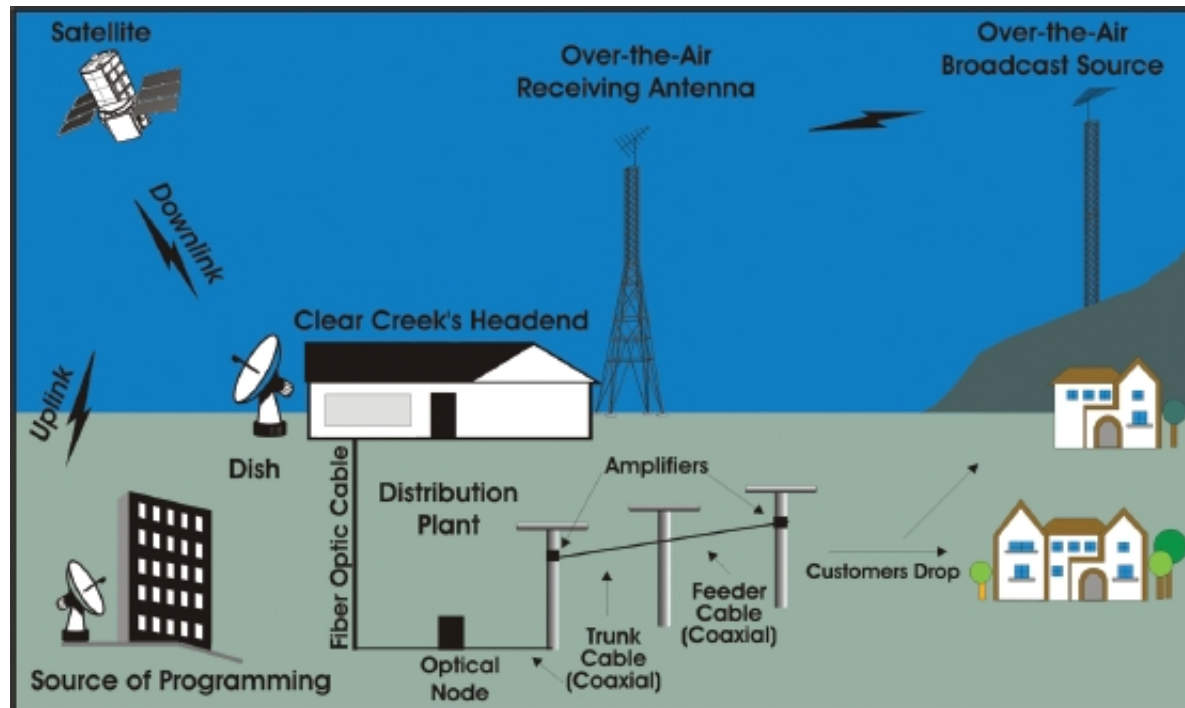
- Eliminated over-the-air interference
- Increased channel capacity



The Wires and Satellites behind Cable Television

- Telstar launched in 1960
- Discovery of how to lock satellites in geosynchronous orbit in the mid-1960s
- How it works
 - Headend relays each channel along its own separate line
 - Signals delivered through trunk and feeder cables

Figure 6.1: A Basic Cable Television System





Cable Services

○ Basic cable services

- Hundred-plus channels
- Local cable company pays each satellite-delivered service a per-subscriber fee.

○ Premium cable services

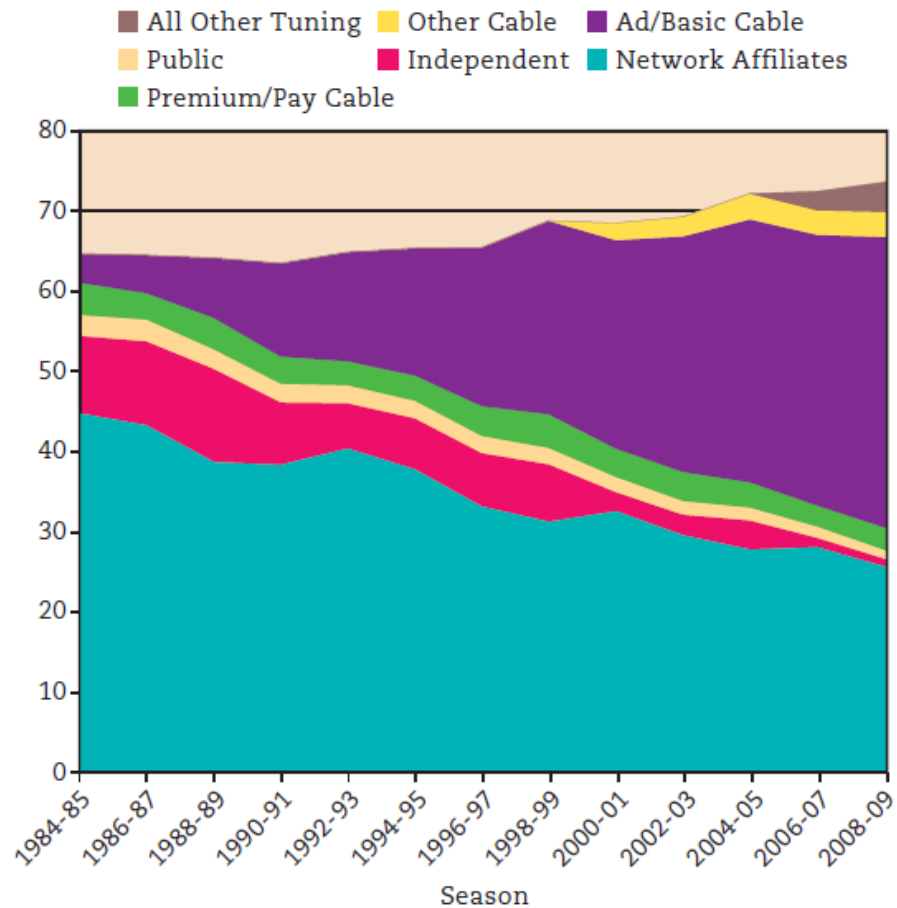
- Premium channels such as HBO
- Pay-per-view (PPV) channels
- Video-on-demand (VOD) channels



DBS: Cable without Wires

- Direct broadcast satellite (DBS) services
 - Transmit a signal directly to a satellite dish at customers' homes
 - Reduced cable penetration
 - Began scrambling signals to prevent free access to broadcasts
 - Modern services include DirecTV and the DISH Network


Figure 6.2: Prime-Time TV Audience, 1984-2009





Home Video

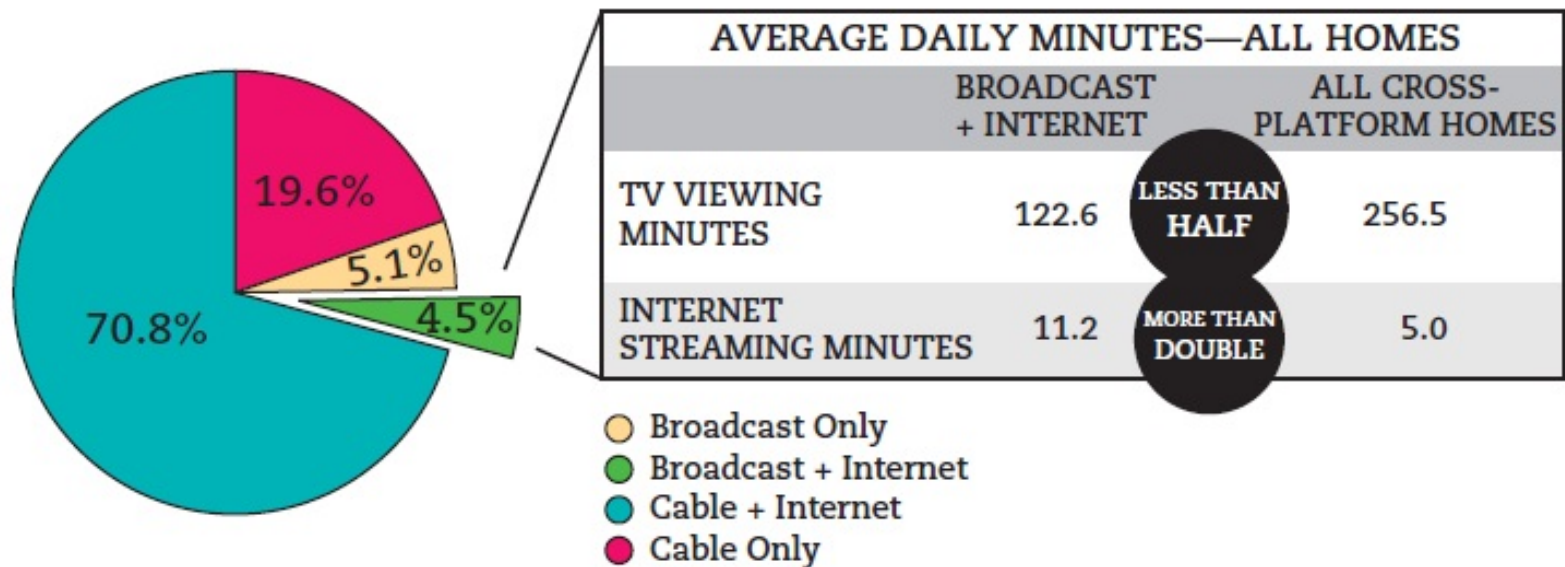
- Videocassette recorders (VCRs)
 - Introduced in the mid-1970s
 - Federal court permitted home taping for personal use
 - Movie rentals became popular
 - Replaced by DVDs, which are being replaced by Blu-ray and DVRs
- Two purposes of DVD and DVR
 - Video rentals and **time shifting**



The Third Screen: TV Converges with the Internet

- Third screen
 - Refers to viewing content on computer screens
 - Used primarily as catch-up services
- Popular sites for viewing video
 - YouTube, iTunes, Hulu, Netflix
- Cable TV giants are also making programs available online.
 - Xfinity TV and HBO Go

Figure 6.3: Cross-Platform Viewing





Fourth Screens: Smartphones and Mobile Video

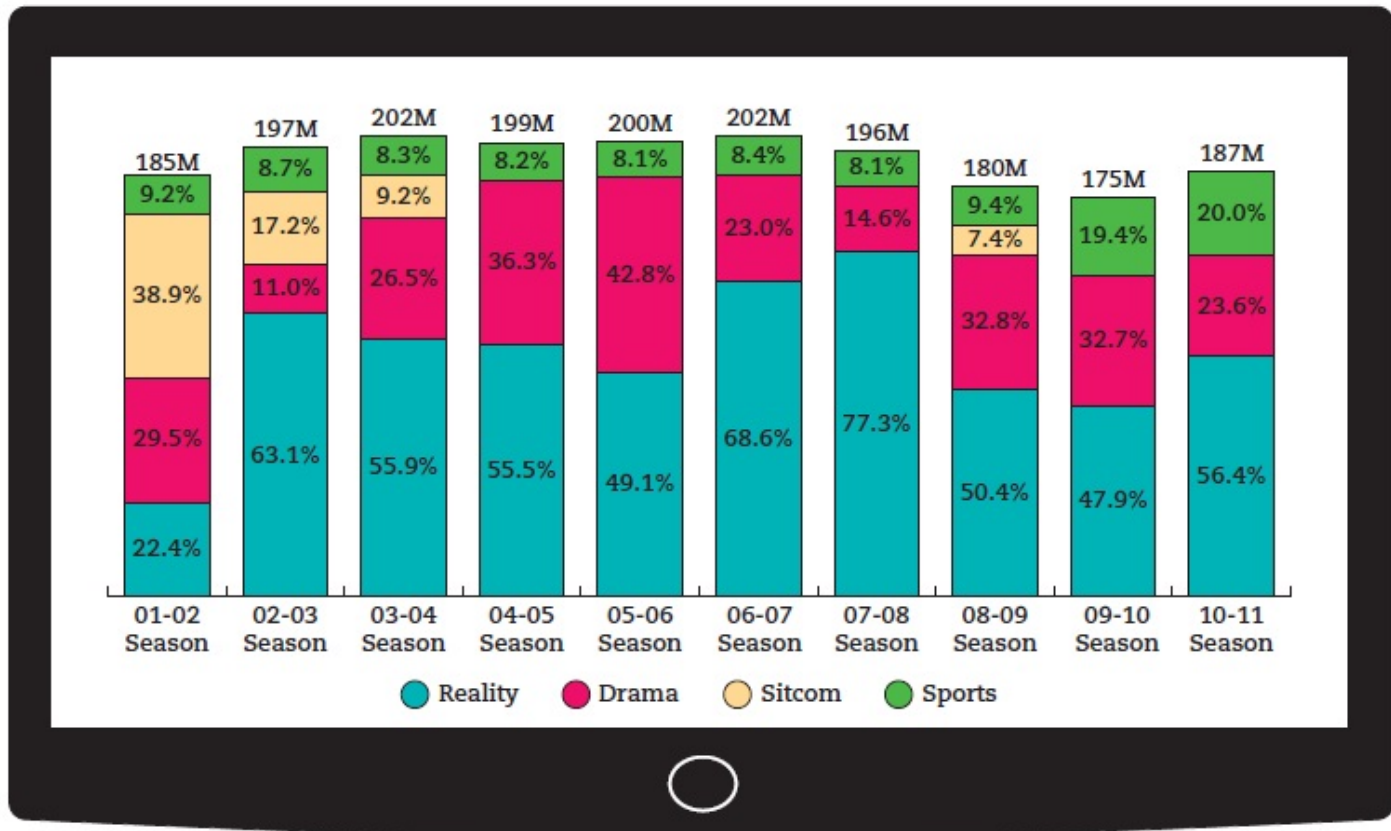
- Fourth-screen technology
 - Smartphones, iPods, iPads, and mobile TV devices
- Forcing major changes in consumer viewing habits and media content creation
- Multifunctionality and portability mean viewers may no longer need TV sets



TV Entertainment: Our Comic Culture

- Networks move to Los Angeles in the 1950s.
- **Kinescopes** were used to preserve live broadcasts.
- Three TV comedy formats
 - **Sketch comedy**
 - **Situation comedy**
 - **Domestic comedy**

Figure 6.4: Top Genres Over the Past Decade





TV Information: Our Daily News Culture

- Network news
 - NBC's *Meet the Press* (1947)
 - *CBS-TV News* (1948)
 - First news show to be videotaped for rebroadcast on [affiliate stations](#) (1956)
 - *ABC World News Tonight* (1978)
- Cable news
 - First cable news channel was CNN
 - Created a 24/7 news cycle



Reality TV and Other Enduring Trends

- Traditional genre trends
 - Talk shows, game shows, variety shows, newsmagazines, and sporting events
- Reality TV
 - Introduces audiences to characters who are more like them
 - Inexpensive to produce
- Spanish-language television



Public Television Struggles to Find Its Place

○ Public television

- Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 leads to the establishment of PBS.
- Targeted viewers that were “less attractive” to commercial networks
- Increasing reliance on corporate underwriting
- Government attempts to ax funding.
- Audience has declined significantly.



The Telecommunications Act of 1996

- Telecommunications Act of 1996
 - Brought cable under federal rules that had long governed the telephone, radio, and TV industries
 - Removed market barriers between phone companies, long-distance carriers, and cable operators
 - Reaffirmed must-carry rules
 - Mixed impact on cable customers



Production

- Two types of production costs
 - Below-the-line
 - Above-the-line
- Programs are funded through deficit financing.
 - Film studios finance the deficit and hope to profit on syndication.
- Less expensive programs
 - Newsmagazines and reality shows

Figure 6.5: Prime-Time Network TV Pricing (2011)

Monday

	8:00pm	8:30pm	9:00pm	9:30pm	10:00pm
ABC	<i>Dancing with the Stars</i> (\$233,482)				<i>Castle</i> (\$121,914)
CBS	<i>How I Met Your Mother</i> (\$168,829)	<i>Two Broke Girls</i> (\$166,678)	<i>Two and a Half Men</i> (\$252,418)	<i>Mike and Molly</i> (\$196,497)	<i>Hawaii Five-0</i> (\$130,514)
NBC	<i>The Voice</i> (\$206,500)		<i>Awake</i> (\$117,550)*		<i>Smash</i> (\$154,000)
FOX	<i>House</i> (\$236,500)		<i>Alcatraz</i> * (\$160,000)		no programming

Note: Figure 6.5 shows the average costs for a thirty-second commercial during prime-time programs, 2011.



Distribution

- Paying for programs
 - Subscriber fees
 - Retransmission fees
 - Licensing fees to affiliate stations
 - Advertising
- Clearance rules allow affiliates to substitute a network's program.

Syndication Keeps Shows Going and Going...

○ Syndication

- Leasing the exclusive right to air TV shows
- Types
 - Off-network syndication
 - First-run syndication
- Cash deal
 - Series goes to the highest bidder.
- Barter deal
 - Syndicator is paid from ad revenue.



Measuring Television Viewing

- Ratings and shares
 - **Ratings** are based on a percentage of households tuned to a sampled program.
 - **Shares** are based on a percentage of homes tuned to a program, compared with those actually using their sets at the time of sample.
- Convergence is changing how TV viewing is measured.



Major Programming Corporations

- Major broadcast networks
 - Remain attractive investments and are acquiring cable channels
- Major cable and DBS companies
 - Multiple-system operators (MSOs)
 - Multichannel video programming distributors (MVPDs)
 - Comcast, DirecTV, and DISH Network are the major players