

The Digital Content NewFronts: The Review

Like TV, But Different

By Sahil Patel

In my Q&A with Janet Balis, SVP and Head of Sales Strategy, Marketing, and Partnerships at AOL, she described digital video content as being different than TV in the sense that digital video is characterized by a scarcity of premium content, at scale. TV's economics, on the other hand, are defined by a scarcity of inventory, she said. In other words, digital video is not only "dogs/cats on skateboards" anymore. It was a phrase that was echoed across a lot of presentations during the inaugural Digital Content NewFronts; aiming to assert the viability and profitability of digital video content to an audience of buyers and advertising decision-makers who may still be lounging on the TV side of the fence. (Incidentally, I would argue that you'd be hard-pressed to find many people who view digital video as just a catalog of pets doing cute/hilarious things. Nonetheless, the point was made that digital video is here and that it has staying power).

But how? It goes back to this strategy of premium content, developed by leading content creators and brands, distributed by prominent online networks (the DCNF presenters) at scale, to an audience that is online and is willing to consume and engage with content that appeals to them. In a nutshell, across every presentation, that was the unifying theme.

This aligns the television model in an interesting way. And not just by taking the established TV industry practice of the Upfront. It can be argued that all television content is premium. That's why the TV Upfronts are a hot ticket. And just like with the TV Upfronts, some of the premium programming presented at the events seemed exciting and likely headed for success, and some not as much. It makes sense; after all, no one bats a thousand. But by collaborating with star producers, filmmakers, and talent, many of whom have had success in television, the digital side is aiming for that same level of respectability in the eyes and wallets of advertisers.

And yet, the DCNF presenters also argued that they, and premium digital content, are different.

AOL, Digitas, Hulu, Microsoft, NBCUniversal, Yahoo!, YouTube, Alloy, DECA, Disney Interactive, Digital Broadcasting Group, PopSugar, VEVO, and every other presenter at the DCNF described how it had the potential to reach a wide audience, and how in many cases, it was already doing so. Therefore, with that capacity in place, all that was needed was premium content targeted to those audiences, whether it be moms, teenagers, men, or many other demos, to create an opportunity where brands could come in and connect with those consumers. And with the interactive and democratic nature of digital content, brands would not have to be confined to

sponsorships and 30-second spot advertisements (even though that is an option as well), or to just one screen (even though that is an option as well).

So was this inaugural event successful?

Yes, kind of. While the conversation surrounding the monetization of digital video had already begun, it can be said that the Digital Content NewFronts were necessary to propel it forward, from a discussion point to one that leads to action. Surveying Digitas' NewFront, which provided a window into where both content providers and advertisers stood on the path to developing a digital video marketplace, it didn't appear that this was a fool's errand. There were opportunities at the Digitas NewFront for brands, agencies, and content creators to meet, discuss, and negotiate deals -- with some 40 or so of such meetings taking place during the six-hour event. This coupled with reports of the individual DCFN presenters sitting down with advertisers indicates that there is legitimate interest in such a marketplace.

That being said, a lot of work still remains. The DCFN presenters were effective in grabbing the attention of some advertisers. At the end of the day, the extent to which each presenter was effective will be determined by how many deals it closed and partnerships it established -- how well it monetized the premium content that it highlighted. That information may be forthcoming, but will be best characterized by how the six founding DCFN partners and other presenters shape the second annual event next year. What will be different, down to the volume of attendees when compared to the inaugural DCFN, will be as important as what will be presented.

Digital video is still in many ways at a nascent stage. Looking ahead, a lot has to be done to get advertisers as on board with it as they are with the TV side, including the ever-important task of proving that the premium digital video showcased at the DCFN is reaching audiences. That information can't come from the content providers alone. There is a necessity for an independent, consistent, and effective measurement that can become a standard for video buying. Forward strides have been made in this department, as exemplified by Nielsen's Online Campaign Ratings initiative, among others, to get advertisers more comfortable with digital video.

It was said during a panel at the Digitas NewFront that it's going to take top brands to monetize digital in an effective way. Simple as it is to say, the inaugural Digital Content NewFronts were successful in pushing digital video forward, getting that foot in the proverbial door. How (not if) it gets to a permanent seat next to TV at the big table is still to be determined.

Here are brief overviews of each individual DCFN presentation, along with one highlight from said event. For a more extensive list of the programming showcased at each event, click through to see the full report.

HULU

Hulu has a lot of content, a large audience consuming it, and advertiser-friendly tools to help brands connect with the audience. Therefore, it argues that advertisers should be giving online video, and by extension Hulu, some attention. It currently boasts approximately 40,000 hours of content across Hulu and Hulu Plus, consisting of more than 50,000 full TV episodes and nearly 1,900 series. Hulu Plus passed the 2 million subscribers mark in Q1 of this year. Hulu mentioned that in February 2012, Americans watched 2.5 billion videos on the website, which it noted as being about 1,000 videos a second. Furthermore, the company said that it is the largest video advertising space in the U.S. in terms of most video ads online. It represents 20% of the overall online video marketplace, as well as 40% of the premium video marketplace, an important distinction considering the theme of the DCNF. And last but not least, it recently rolled out an ad offering where it will only charge advertisers based on 100% completion rates.

Highlight:

Don't Quit Your Daydream, a new series from actor/filmmaker Adrian Grenier, who spoke at the event, based on a documentary by Grenier and John Loar. Targeted toward the 18-34 demographic, the docu-series follows a cast of musicians that travel across the country in search of artists to collaborate on a new song, thereby giving them a second chance at stardom. Still in development, this series is available for brand sponsorships.

Programming:

- **Battleground**, from Marc Webb and J.D. Walsh: Hulu's first original series, a political drama about a Senate campaign (aiming for the 18-34 age demographic).
- **A Day in the Life**, from Morgan Spurlock: Now in its second season, the documentary series chronicles one day in the life of various personalities (18-34 demographic).
- **Up To Speed**, from Richard Linklater: It is coming to Hulu this summer, and is intended for the 18-49 demographic.
- **We Got Next**, from Kenya Barris: A new series to debut this year about four friends who battle on and off a pick-up basketball court (18-49).
- **The Awesomes**, from Seth Meyers and Michael Shoemaker: An animated action series that follows a team of superheroes that battle villains and the paparazzi. It will come to Hulu in 2013 (18-49).
- **Flow**, from Michael Wendschuh, David Belle, Agility Studios and the Shine Group: A series that follows an individual's quest for justice after being framed for a crime he didn't commit (18-34). Available for sponsorship.

POPSUGAR

A digital commerce, original content, and global media company, PopSugar positioned itself as an influential lifestyle brand for women. To that end, the company produces several original web series, live event coverage, and celebrity interviews, as well as other editorial content, devoted to the female audience. It said it currently attracts 28+ million unique visitors per month, and that its original video content generates nearly 30 million video views per month across all of its distribution platforms. The company featured POPSUGARtv, a programming initiative that is comprised of 19 original shows, all produced in-house.

Highlight:

PopSugar announced that it was in the process of building live broadcast studio sets at their offices in New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, with the intention of establishing a live 24/7 network.

Programming:

- **FabSugar:** Focusing on the fashion-related content.
- **BellaSugar:** Beauty-related content.
- **FitSugar:** Fitness.
- **YumSugar:** Food.
- **I'm a Huge Fan:** An original video series that follows a fan as she gets to meet and interview her favorite celebrity. Celebrities that have participated and been interviewed on this show include Jennifer Aniston

DIGITAL BROADCASTING GROUP

Touting its capabilities as a full-service (production to distribution) content company, DBG's presentation shined a light on its past successes in collaborating with brands to create original, branded entertainment. This includes a partnership with McDonald's to produce two seasons of the Hispanic-focused Latinos Are One, as well as collaborating with Pier One to produce and distribute Design and Conquer.

Highlight:

CLiP (content library platform): A video player populated with several different content channels that are embedded directly in publishers' websites (approximately 300, which DBG said lead to 35 million streams per month). CLiP offers ad inventory that is adjacent to curated content that is relevant to a specific audience. At its presentation, DBG showcased the six content channels that are a part of CLiP, including Entertainment, Sports, Men's Lifestyle, Women's Lifestyle, Business/Tech, and Travel.

Programming:

- **SPACES:** A new channel on YouTube, as part of its original programming initiative, which will launch on May 7. The channel will revolve around "advice-driven programming" on the topic of design.

- New web series for the SPACES include **Your Place is a Dealbreaker** (an interior designer helps a couple transform their home into something they both can agree on), **Urban Gardener**, **Offbeat Spaces** (a weekly docu-series that spotlights tiny apartments, offices, etc.), and **Profiles in Design** (a spotlight on influential designers across the globe).
- **The Bartenders NYC:** Shines a light on New York's private party scene through the eyes of those who bartend the events. Available for brand integration/sponsorship.
- **Expecting:** A documentary series in partnership with People.com that follows three women throughout their pregnancies. Available for brand integration/sponsorship.

MICROSOFT

Microsoft Advertising's DCNF focused on the ability of digital to provide a platform through which brands can create customized content experiences, as well as Microsoft's capabilities in helping brands and agencies reach and engage with consumers wherever they are -- on multiple platforms. This included highlighting MSN Now, which is a new product that aims to "go beyond video." Launched simultaneously across mobile, PC, and Facebook, it uses a platform built in-house that identifies trends on the web, after which an editorial team will write a blurb about said trend and then provide links to related content on MSN.

Highlight:

Xbox LIVE. Microsoft said 50+ partners have signed on in the last four months to offer content apps through the console. In addition, the company said that Xbox LIVE (gold members) spend 84 hours a month on the service. For them, entertainment app usage has surpassed multiplayer gaming on the service. Essentially, it said that it has turned the largest screen in the house, the TV, into a digital screen. Microsoft also delved into how Kinect will be capable of creating interactive programming. For example, a kids/mom program where kids can "cook" their favorite meals alongside a celebrity chef, after which the mother can cook that dish in real life.

Programming:

- **FOX Sports on MSN:** FOXSports.com will provide on-site coverage of the upcoming Summer Olympics. Former Olympic athletes have signed on to produce original video features showcasing inspirational stories among current U.S. athletes. Gold medalist Dominique Dawes spoke about having already shot a number of Olympic profile pieces. She also announced Physique with Dominique, a new show she is developing with FOX Sports focusing on physical fitness. Former NFL referee Mike Pereira discussed how he uses social platforms to engage with and teach fans the rules of the game. Other highlighted FOX Sports-related

programming included After Party with Jay Glazer and Coach Speak with Brian Billick.

- **MSN Video:** It's an ad-supported aggregator of video. Programs that are featured on the platform include Last Night on TV, This Night on Main, Your Money, Taste of Place, Road Raves, Seven Wonders of the Wall, and Hot Guys Doing Horoscopes.
- **NBC News:** A partnership through which additional content from shows like Rock Center with Brian Williams will be accessible via MSN as well as an array of custom-branded digital properties.
- **DV Guide:** New series targeted to the digitally savvy audience who is interested in cord-cutting and consuming a lot of media online. Editorially, the show will not be confined to Microsoft products or services.
- **Today in the Park:** A comedy series targeted exclusively to moms. Microsoft described the show's watch rate as 90%; it has been renewed for a second season, which will be launching soon.

AOL

AOL made a large leap forward in unifying and enhancing its digital video offering. It launched the AOL On Network, a new video platform that encompasses AOL's entire video offering. AOL On includes a consumer-facing video hub, on which content will be curated across 14 distinct channels, as well as video playlists that feature both original and partner content. Celebrities, such as Heidi Klum, Adrian Grenier, Christine Valchon, and more, have signed on to curate their own AOL On playlists, and brands will be able to curate playlists as well. All together, AOL said it will provide an audience reach of 57 million viewers across multiple sites and connected TV devices.

Highlight:

The Huffington Post Streaming Network (HPSN), which is slated to arrive in June. It will stream 12 hours of live programming each weekday. AOL has structured the network to support a handful of category exclusive sponsors, who can partner and integrate content "deeply" into the live show. Aside from that, the content on HPSN will also be broken down into short-form videos that can be viewed on-demand. That's not all, the Huffington Post will also get the iPad magazine treatment, and additional sections will be launched that allow brands to partner with content that demonstrates the "values and causes" with which they want to be identified.

Programming:

- **Digital Justice:** Premiered yesterday on AOL On Tech and HuffPost Crime; a weekly reality show that follows digital forensic experts as they solve cyber crimes.

- **Fetching:** From Sex and the City's Amy Harris; a comedy series that follows a young woman in New York who quits her job to follow her dream of opening her own business, a daycare for dogs.
- **Little Women Big Cars:** Premiering on May 7; a comedy series that follows the trials and tribulations four soccer moms.
- **Next Door Hero:** Unscripted stories that puts a spotlight on normal people who have extraordinary stories.
- **Nina Garcia:** The best-selling author and Project Runway judge dispenses fashion and style advice for women.
- **Tiger Beat Entertainment:** Executive producers include Jennifer Lopez and Simon Fields; an entertainment news and lifestyle series "for, about, and by teens and young adults."
- **ur + 1:** a social gaming platform that will debut during the 2013 awards season; a fantasy sports-style game that will allow users to draft celebrities and earn points based on coverage of those stars on AOL properties.
- An original video series where Twitter Co-Founder Biz Stone interviews leaders on the topic of corporate social responsibility.

VEVO

VEVO focused on the unique opportunities music video programming is able to provide in connecting brands with audiences. It also framed its capabilities in reaching audiences against that of TV, throwing out numbers such as Katy Perry's music video for "California Girls" hitting 3.2 million views in one week, which is equal to an episode of GLEE. Furthermore, it touted its ability to reach the all-important 18-35 demographic, as well as its syndication network that spans its own site, YouTube, Yahoo!, Xbox, Facebook, and more.

Highlight:

The ability for brands to target and interact with consumers based on curated playlists created by the users themselves. VEVO said that this manner of short-form music video content being "stitched" together into a long-form format is capable of boosting viewer engagement.

Programming:

- **Busk or Bust:** Co-produced with Shine America (*The Biggest Loser*, *The Office*); a reality competition series where contestants must "sing for their supper."
- **Cover Stories:** Co-produced with Amos Content Group; a comedy series that enacts fake back-stories behind famous album covers.
- **Hear Me Out:** Co-produced with Principato-Young Entertainment; a dating show where the participants' musical choices/tastes play a significant role.
- **Sound + City:** Co-produced with Show Cobra; a show that aims to uncover the influences (people, places, things) behind the music

culture of a particular city. The first six episodes will cover Nashville, Brooklyn, Miami, San Francisco, Portland, and Atlanta.

- **Strange Island:** Co-produced with WEIRD LOGIC, Hello! And Company; a scripted musical comedy series that VEVO is describing as a cross between Flight of the Conchords and Glee. It's about four aspiring musicians who are pursuing fame.
- **You Play Like A Girl:** Co-produced with Mike Welch; Hosted by Sam Maloney, a former drummer for the Motley Crue, the series focuses on searching the country for talented girl musicians, and giving them a helpful boost.
- **Returning programming** includes GO Shows, Area Codes, Stylized, and its live-event platform, VEVO Presents. The company will also continue its live-event partnerships with American Express and YouTube (American Express Unstaged), AOL (Sessions +1), and CBS Interactive Music Group (Live on Letterman).

YAHOO!

Yahoo! highlighted the wide audience reach of its numerous content verticals, including Yahoo! Finance, Yahoo! Sports, and Yahoo! News, as well as how they (positively) stack up against competitive offerings from other digital companies, including fellow DCNF founding partners. The company also spoke at length about its content strategy, described as providing premium, contextualized content. Yahoo! gathers data about what appeals to a wide array of demographics, which it then packages to brands who want to develop and align with content that would "laser-target" those consumers. Erin McPherson has likened this to "TV on steroids." The company has also placed an emphasis on collaborations with prominent content creators to develop original programming.

Highlight:

Cybergeddon, a feature film written and directed by CSI creator Anthony Zuiker, in partnership with Norton by Symantec, which counseled the filmmakers on technology and privacy-related issues. The full-length film is about a worldwide technological catastrophe, and will follow a unique distribution model; it will be broken down into several segments and distributed one-by-one exclusively on Yahoo!.

Programming:

- **Katie's Take:** Under the existing partnership between Yahoo! and ABC News, this new weekly online-only show will be hosted by Katie Couric, available through Yahoo! News. In the show, which will debut on May 1, Couric will take a look at relevant health and lifestyle trends and issues. Poland Spring Natural Water has already signed on to be the exclusive launch sponsor of the series.
- **Electric City:** A 90-minute animated sci-fi series produced by and starring Tom Hanks.

- **Talk show hosted by Jeff Goldblum (title TBD):** Premiering in July, produced by Yahoo! Studios.
- **Stunt Nation:** Premiering in July, from Fishbowl Worldwide Media; a weekly five-minute show that features incredible stunts, as well as one mishap.
- **KaBOOM!:** Debuting in July, from Eyeboogie; Yahoo! described this three-minute show's concept as "ridiculously fun objects getting blown to smithereens."
- **Dancing With Myself (working title):** Debuts in 2013, from the creators of the Broadway musical *Rock of Ages*; it's a musical "jukebox" comedy that is set in a small town in Ohio in the mid-80's, featuring a soundtrack of popular rock/pop songs from that decade.

ALLOY DIGITAL

Alloy touted its track record in integrating brands/products into premium online video content, citing awards it has won, including My Day My Life's Digiday Video Award for "Best Branded Web Series" and the Ad Age "Most Innovative Use of Original Web Video for Merchandising" for Kmart First Day.

Highlight:

Chasing Cobra Starship, a new reality competition series that is premiering in July 2012. Targeted toward the 12-34 demo, the show follows teams of music fans as they embark on a Cobra Starship-centric scavenger hunt in order win VIP access to the band. In a well-timed bit of promotional integration, Cobra Starship performed to close out the event.

Programming:

- **30 Days To Popular:** August 2012 (12-24 demo); a comedy series about two best friends and their 30-day journey to the top of the high school social chain.
- **Change of My Heart:** Premiered in January 2012 (18-34 demo); a comedy series about a career-driven 20-something single woman who, after a heart transplant, enters the dating scene for the first time.
- **Style Rules:** Ongoing series (18-34 demo); A competition series that pits two best friends against each other to design looks for a variety of occasions. Alloy has already produced nine videos for this series, hosted by celebrity stylist Rachel Zoe. The episodes have collectively racked up 1.7 million views on YouTube.
- **Dating Rules:** Season 2 to premiere in July 2012 (18-34 demo); A sci-fi comedy that follows a 20-something girl who is contacted via text message by her future self, telling her to change her irresponsible lifestyle. Season 1 generated over 14 million views.
- **My Day My Life:** Ongoing series (the demo varies by series); The show captures a day in the life of a celebrity. Previous shows have followed the likes of Ashley Tisdale (*High School Musical*) and Shay Mitchell (*Pretty Little Liars*).

- **SMOSH:** Web-based comedy duo Ian Hecox and Anthony Padilla produce videos, photos, games, and blogs. Content distribution points include a YouTube channel.

DISNEY INTERACTIVE

Disney Interactive defined its digital content strategy as “Entertainment, with heart.” To that end the company unveiled a slew of original programming targeted toward families, with kids and moms especially in mind.

Highlight:

Daily Shot with Ali Wentworth; a quick morning show where the comedienne delivers news and her perspective on current events/trends. The show is distributed primarily on Yahoo! and Babble, which Disney recently purchased. However, it was announced that the show is coming to the iPhone soon. Ali Wentworth and her production team shot the next day’s episode at Disney’s event.

Programming:

- **Power Up:** A series about gaming culture, hosted by YouTube personality Christina Grimmie. Considering the host’s background, the use of social media to engage with the audience will be a focal part of the show.
- **Talking Friends:** Based on the popular mobile apps; the plan is to develop 10 episodes. Disney mentioned that the apps already have an established and engaged audience, as over 750K videos have been uploaded from the app online.
- **Where Is My Water:** An animated series, also based on a popular mobile game, follows an alligator who, despite living in the sewers, is a neat freak. It will initially consist of 12 episodes.
- **Moms Of:** An interview series that puts the spotlight on moms of famous people across the world, starting with Heisman-winning athlete Mark Ingram.
- **That’s Fresh:** A “recipe-based show” hosted by Helen Cavallo that takes a look at a fresh ingredient and offers multiple ways to use that ingredient. The short-form program will air both digitally and on-air, and will be available in English and Spanish.
- **Thinking Up:** Starring Courtney Watkins, the show will focus on how to creatively solve stressful and difficult parenting situations, such as children being disruptive at a restaurant. The series will also feature a blog on Babble, and some content will also be distributed on-air.
- **Dadsasters:** A reality show about stay-at-home dads.

DIGITAS

Now in its fifth year, Digitas' NewFront featured a lineup of panels that aimed to provide a context for what digital content and social media can offer brands and their agencies. Over 500 Digitas clients and partners attended the event, which starred a wide array of celebrities active in the digital space, including Heidi Klum, Anthony Zuiker, and Ali Wentworth. Panels included "Stuck at the Like," featuring Mashable's Adam Ostrow and CMOs from brands such as Xerox and J.Crew, as well as Buddy Media's CEO Michael Lazerow. This panel aimed to provide insight on using premium content to engage with users, which meant going beyond accumulating basic metrics such as "likes."

Highlight:

The "Stars of the Social Screens" panel, which featured a discussion between Piers Morgan, Michelle Phan, Felicia Day, and Kristin Chenoweth that covered the importance of authenticity when it comes to connecting with audiences through digital and social platforms.

Programming:

- **Status Updates** from MTV
- **You Snooze You Lose** from Electus
- **Speakeasy**, a talk show hosted by Paul F. Tompkins, from Break Media
- **Megan and Liz** from The Collective, based on the popular YouTube channel.

DECA

Scheduled for Mother's Day, DECA's re-launch of mom-focused website Momversation.com is centered on creating and providing an online video (short-form, unscripted) destination for women. Partners of the re-launch include NBCUniversal's iVillage, Discovery, Viacom, Time Inc., and Disney, as well as three major network/content partnerships that the company will announce in the coming weeks. DECA also provided advertisers with data that demonstrated its ability to reach moms online, stating that it attracts 3.9 million monthly uniques on Momversation.com and generates more than 4 million video views per month. Moreover, DECA's audience data shows that it is 97% female, 78% women between the ages of 25 and 44, 31% households with an income above \$100,000, and 73% households with an education level of college or above.

Highlight:

In July, DECA will extend its M-Network on to YouTube, and said it will result in a roll-up of hundreds of top women's channels and websites.

Programming:

- **Preparing Your Child for a New Year:** A series that will feature parenting experts providing moms with tips to prepare their kids for the new school year.
- **Back-to-School Shopping:** Tips and recommendations to wade through the clutter and find the best deals and latest trends (at affordable prices) for back-to-school shopping.
- **Beyond the Sandwich:** Healthy (and tasty) recipes for school lunches.

INTERACTIVE ADVERTISING BUREAU

The Interactive Advertising Bureau NewFront was actually a three-for-one deal, with Funny or Die, The Daily, and The Onion each presenting their capabilities in the online video space. Here are the highlights from each:

FUNNY OR DIE:

- **Some monthly stats:** 14.6 million unique visitors; 24.1 million visits; 43.2 million page views; and 63.5 million view views.
- **Customized Branded Entertainment:** The Funny or Die team touted its ability to provide brands with services that span the content creation chain, from development to distribution at scale. It defined its value proposition as a partner that offers “Hollywood production” quality content, personalized to a brand’s specific campaign and/or goals.
- **“First Look” Content Distribution:** A partnership with National CineMedia will result in the national cinema advertising network carrying Funny or Die content. Through this, Funny or Die is offering an audience reach beyond at a wider scale as it would create customized branded content, which would then be able to be screened across NCM’s network.
- **Billy on the Street:** Picked up for a second season by Fuse Networks; a “cash cab”/“man on the street” style game show with a twist: the final round is subjective, based on the opinions of the host, Billy Eichner.

THE DAILY:

- An iPhone version of the popular iPad magazine is on the way (“really soon”).
- Has a custom video channel on Samsung TVs.
- Has pieced together a video production team of industry veterans hired from the likes of Viacom and ABC, and has “ramped up production” of video content.
- **The Daily’s Weekly News Network:** A puppet-based news show that will expand to more devices, including, as noted earlier, the iPhone.

- **Launching the Rocket:** A reality series where the host performs interesting stunts, such as going on 50 dates in 50 states, or participating in a paintball battle with active-duty Marines. The short-form series will feature a wide range of one-off episodes and content, creating multiple opportunities for brand participation.

THE ONION:

- The Onion highlighted the Onion News Network, as well as existing series that lampoon popular today's news programming/culture, including **Today Now!** (morning news); **Tech Trends** (tech news); **Onion Sports Dome** (ESPN/SportsCenter); **Star Fix** (entertainment news); and **WONN-5** (local news). The Onion mentioned how it can take existing promotional practices on actual news programs (e.g. ESPN's use of sponsored segments) and do something similar with brand partners on its fake news segments.
- **The Night Spot** (a send-up of late night talk shows with a host in the vein of Jay Leno); **Pop Smear** (satirizing entertainment/gossip bloggers and TMZ); **The Gab** (roughly based on The View); among others.
- Outside of its fake news content, The Onion also focused on its other prominent digital property: **The A.V. Club**. The entertainment news and culture website will offer its own selection of original programming, including, but not limited to **Pop Pilgrims** (a "pop culture" travel show that visits famous film landmarks) and **Stand Down** (a cartoon series where a comedian is invited to recount a memorable stand-up gig, which is then animated into a short video).

NBCUNIVERSAL

NBCUniversal rolled out a slew of digital offerings spanning its portfolio of digital and television properties, which it said reaches 78 million monthly uniques, and 110 million if including NBC.com and Weather.com. It announced a unified "digital programming event" for Cyber Monday this coming November, and the Universal Games Network (UGN), a new casual and social gaming platform that is integrated across NBCU properties. It will aggregate all of NBCU's games; will allow players to amass points and redeem them for real and virtual goods across all NBCU gaming properties; and will be integrated with Facebook Connect.

Highlight:

Bravo Media's 80 Plates Tweet Challenge: Teaming up with Infiniti, Bravo will give fans of the network's new reality culinary competition series Around the World in 80 Plates a chance to win plane tickets to a destination featured on the show. By tweeting #80plateschallenge every week, fans can get closer and closer to pinpointing the location of the plane tickets (to that week's

featured destination) on an interactive map on BravoTV.com and on Bravo mobile. The tickets can be in one of 10 secret U.S. cities each week.

Programming:

- **Fandango Cine:** A Telemundo and Fandango collaboration that will offer movie-related editorial and video programming in Spanish from Fandango, Telemundo, and mun2, all directed toward the Hispanic audience. It will also provide Fandango's movie info and ticketing services.
- **StyleCandy:** A partnership between Style Media and Daily Candy offering short-form original content on Style Network, DailyCandy.com, and MyStyle.com. Down the road, DailyCandy Deals will power e-commerce offerings to Style's TV audience. StyleCandy will launch this fall.
- **Inside Story,** from DailyCandy: Will follow famous and influential fashion and jewelry designers, celebrity stylists, and beauty specialists. The series will launch on May 9, and will be distributed via email, dailycandy.com, and across DailyCandy's social properties. Toyota Prius c has signed on to sponsor the first three episodes.
- **Video Village,** a new channel from iVillage: It will feature **My Best Idea**, which is a new video series that merges professionally curated content with tips delivered via video from the iVillage community. Additional video commitments include a new beauty-focused web series, and videos featuring editors' commentary on current issues. Other new franchises that will join My Best Idea and other existing series are: **The Conversation Thread** (a talk show featuring Chief Correspondent Kelly Wallace), **iVoices on iVillage** (real members report on local and topical issues), **Woman of the Week**, and **iVillage 5** (a weekly snapshot of current events).
- Timed to launch alongside the season 2 premiere of The Glee Project, Oxygen Connect is a social TV platform from Oxygen Media that will give viewers the chance to earn points/badges by completing weekly missions. The big prize will be a chance to meet one of the contenders on the show. The Oxygen Connect: The Glee Project mobile app will feature additional content such as polls, videos, ads, live social chats, and more.

GOOGLE/YOUTUBE

Google and YouTube profess an interesting point of differentiation when compared to all of the other presenters at the DCNF: YouTube has no interest in being a digital network. It wants to be a digital MSO, where it will get out of the way and provide a platform for brands and content creators to develop original channels, targeted to specific audiences. However, unlike the traditional MSO, YouTube is willing to front the money to develop these channels and networks (admittedly, it has to). When the initiative was first

announced last fall, YouTube said that it would front \$100 million toward developing premium original content for the site. At its Brandcast, it pledged \$200 million to promote the 100 original content channels across both YouTube and the Google Display Network. In other words, Google and YouTube are very serious about this ongoing original programming initiative. In fact, by the end of July, it said there is going to be 25 hours of new original content on YouTube every day.

Highlight:

Aside from the Jay-Z performance, YouTube unveiled WIGS, a new channel that focuses on scripted dramatic series and short films about the lives of women. The channel is the brainchild of filmmakers Jon Avnet (*Black Swan*, *Risky Business*) and Rodrigo Garcia (*In Treatment*). The content on the channel will feature the likes of Virginia Madsen, Stephen Moyer, Jennifer Garner, Alfred Molina, Julia Stiles, all of whom star in the first three series, with Jennifer Beals, America Ferrera, Dakota Fanning, Alison Janney, and others signed on to appear in upcoming series. The content will also feature documentaries, behind-the-scenes videos, and other unscripted content, all starring female leads. The channel is set to launch in May.

Programming:

- **TeamUSA:** Also looking to get into the Summer Olympic programming game, this channel from the United States Olympic Committee will include original content featuring 2012 U.S. Olympians, hopefuls, and legends from previous years, as well as instruction from Olympic sport coaches, and historical Olympic Games footage. AT&T will sponsor the channel.
- **The Picture Show:** The channel comes from Tribeca Enterprises, parent company of the Tribeca Film Festival, and YouTube partner Maker Studios. It will arrive on the video site later this year.
- **Halo 4:** Forward Unto Dawn, a new live-action series that serves as a precursor to the events of Halo 4. The show will appear on both Machinima's and Halo Waypoint's YouTube channels. It is slated to premiere in the fall.
- These four channels join the ones that have already launched on YouTube (between 40 and 50 to date, according to Robert Kyncl), including those from Machinima, DanceOn, Nerdist, u look haute, the Warner Sound, and more; and featuring the likes of Rainn Wilson, Amy Poehler, Jay-Z, Electus, The Onion, Justin Lin, and more.