

# Personal, interactive: The future of TV

DW Deutsche Welle

Paul-Christian Britz, New York  
2014-11-02



The screenshot shows a YouTube video player interface. The main video is titled "The Spread of the Caliphate: The Islamic State (Part 1)" by VICE NEWS. The video has 3,608,787 views and 1,338 dislikes. The video content shows a man in a light-colored shirt and a cap, holding a rifle, sitting against a textured wall. The video player includes a progress bar, volume control, and a "SUBSCRIBE" button. To the right of the video player, there is a list of related videos, including "From ISIS to the Islamic State" and "The Spread of the Caliphate: The Islamic State (Part 1)".

© 2014 DW.DE, Deutsche Welle

Magazines and newspapers have had financial trouble for years. Now, broadcasters are worried. Young people are turning their backs on traditional TV. In New York, Paul-Christian Britz looks at the future of the industry.

"The good news is, I am not talking about the state of the newspaper industry," says Amy Mitchell, prompting chuckles from the audience. Mitchell works for the Washington-based think tank PEW Research, which focuses on social issues and public opinion. She is one of the keynote speakers at a workshop at City University of New York (CUNY). "TV remains the number one way of how people get news," Mitchell explains. "But it is declining. And it is declining pretty rapidly."

PEW studies show that among 18 to 29-year-old viewers only 30 percent consume

their news via linear TV. Eight years ago, 42 percent watched their news on TV.

"We did not come here to bury TV, but to reinvent it," says journalism professor Jeff Jarvis. Desperation, he says, has hit newspapers and magazines and forced them to think about new opportunities. TV would need to be faster and react now, before desperation grabs hold of the industry as well. "Bashing and whining is not allowed. Today is about possibilities," Jarvis adds and gives every participant the opportunity to introduce an idea.

Jenni Hogan works as a presenter and has been in the business for several years. "My idea is a virtual news reality game for newsrooms." She explains how viewers and anchors could interact during a news show. Mark Briggs is a TV reporter and wants to personalize video clips for each viewer. "We live in the age of personalization," he says.

"People trust people first," argues Riyaad Minty. He was part of a team that built up the social media section at Al Jazeera TV. People, he argues, do not go to a specific brand name they trust to consume news anymore. Instead, they would get their news through their personal networks of friends. "When breaking news happens a lot of times I get a message: 'Have you seen this story?'" The effort of broadcasters, he says, should focus on joining people's conversations and becoming part of the conversation instead of merely speaking to an audience.

## **Personal and social**

The panel seems to agree that the future of TV will be in personalized news that are easily shared in social networks. The terms "personal" and "social" are the ones that come up most in the discussion. Overall the suggestions range from applications for cell phones and other mobile devices to ideas for digital shows and specific technical equipment.

Edo Segal presents TouchCast, a new program for tablets. The developer describes it as "the Web in a video" rather than video on the web. It creates fully browseable, interactive videos that embed everything from websites, Twitter feeds and YouTube videos to polls and news tickers. Communication has transformed in a way that relates to that idea, he says. "We say google this, google that, have you youtubed this?" People talk in hyperlinks - and TouchCast wants to bring this approach to your device.

With the service, a reporter can produce his or her own show without studio space. If a viewer wants to get more information about the reported topic he can touch on the screen to zoom into maps, open other web pages or read related tweets. BBC News in the UK is already working with that system.

## Engaging the viewer directly

A project that is already up and running, however, is causing some controversy: Vice News is a format run by the New York-based media company Vice. Twenty years ago, Vice was a magazine focusing on alternative arts, culture, and news topics. Since March, they have been reporting video news in what they describe as an "immersive style."

"Our reporters try to take people along in the story gathering process," says editor in chief Jason Mojica. The viewer takes part in the development of the topic: parts of the story are already broadcast, while journalists are still figuring out what the end will look like.

But the industry is skeptical. When Vice accompanied the Islamic group ISIS in a feature called "Inside ISIS" a New York Times reporter claimed that the militants were given too much room for their opinions. The immersive, inside reporting style had made it easy for the terror group to use Vice as another propaganda channel.

## Immersive reporting attracts young viewers

However, young people who are turning away from traditional TV channels seem to be attracted by the immersive style, Mojica reports. Vice is already partnering with channels like HBO in the US and the German show "Spiegel TV." Why does the eclectic young production want to deal with the stiff old TV industry at all, Jeff Jarvis is wondering during the discussion. "Why do people rob banks?" Mojica replies. "Because that is where the money is. TV is still alive in terms of business."

In 2012, Vice made around \$175 million (137.7 million euros) in revenue. Founder Shane Smith claims a profit margin of more than 30 percent. And even if traditional TV channels disappeared, Vice could still rely on its fan base in social networks. The show "Inside ISIS" alone generated more than 3.5 million monthly clicks on YouTube. Around five million people have already subscribed to their channel, a strong selling point when it comes to finding commercial partners.

## Listen to the audience

"We have to get away from the idea that we are in the content business," Jarvis says. Journalism, he says, is a service to the public. "In order to be a service to the public you have to know the public and should start with listening."

He recalls how journalists in the first years of Twitter used the microblogging website to alert the audience to their content. Now, it would be used to listen to followers and

get an idea about what is relevant for them. TV journalism is going in the same direction, Jarvis points out. "We have to start by listening to our audience instead of starting by producing content." That would turn journalism on its head.

Author: Paul-Christian Britz, New York

Editor: Nicole Goebel



[GO TO MSN HOME](#)

## MORE IN NEWS

---



### By the numbers: Homicide rates in Canada



### Kurds deny Canadian-Israeli fighter kidnapped


Some accounts say Islamic State-linked websites claimed to have captured Gill Rosenberg; other accounts say she's safe and sound in northern Syria

 The Globe and Mail



### Couple accused of hiding teen denied bail

A couple accused of hiding a boy, 13, behind a false wall in their home south of Atlanta, Ga., has been denied bail after being charged with child cruelty and false imprisonment.

 CBC



### Badass Indian Women Beat Up Men Who Were Harassing...

Two women were on their way home via bus in India when they were sexually harassed by three men — so they took out their belts and fought back. The men are now in police

 NowThis News



### Woman accused of hiding dead babies seeks bail

A Winnipeg woman accused of hiding the remains of six infants in a storage locker is seeking bail. Andrea Giesbrecht is scheduled to appear in court this afternoon.

 Metro News



## Indian IS recruit 'goes home after having to clean toilets'

An Indian student who travelled to Iraq to join the Islamic State group has returned home disillusioned after jihadists made him clean toilets and do other menial jobs, according to

 Agence France-Presse (AFP)

---

### LEAVE YOUR COMMENT



Add a comment...

**Comment**

---

Facebook social plugin