

THE WESA NEWSLETTER

associated with NATIONAL ELECTRONIC SERVICE DEALERS ASSOCIATION

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ANOTHER RECORD FOR BRETT

Minnesota Vikings quarterback Brett Favre's sterling performance against his former club, the Green Bay Packers, set the stage for ESPN to record **the most-watched show in cable history.**

Brett Favre topped his former squad the Green Bay Packers. Minnesota's 30-23 triumph over the Pack averaged a 15.3 rating, 15.1 million households and 21.8 million viewers, according to Nielsen data. That's the most viewers and greatest number of households for a single telecast in cable history, according to ESPN officials.

The 15.3 rating is also the tops for ESPN, breaking the 14.4 mark the sports programmer scored with its Dec. 6, 1987 presentation of Vikings-Chicago Bears, during its first season televising National Football League games.

The Oct. 5 telecast shattered the previous MNF record under ESPN's watch: the Sept. 15, 2008 contest between the Dallas Cowboys-Philadelphia Eagles, which tackled 18.6 million viewers.

MNF now accounts for three of the top four most-watched shows in cable history. When adding in live + seven-day viewing, the Aug. 17, 2007 premiere of Disney Channel telepic High School Musical 2 edged out the Cowboys-Eagles game for second-place. The Dec. 3, 2007 game between the Baltimore Ravens and the then-undefeated New England Patriots ranks fourth with 17.5 million watchers. A debate about the North American Free Trade Agreement between then-Vice President Al Gore and Ross Perot that aired on CNN's Larry King Live on Nov. 9, 1993 places fifth with 16.8 million viewers.

Since acquiring the rights to MNF in 2006, ESPN has now set the cable household viewership record four times in as many years. All told, cable's five biggest household audiences ever -- and eight of the top 10 -- excluding breaking news are ESPN's MNF telecasts.

For its five MNF telecasts thus far during the 2009 season, ESPN averaged an 11.4 rating, 11.3 million households and nearly 15.7 million watchers on average, gains of 19%, 21% and 24%, respectively, from this point in the 2008 campaign.

MNF has scored as the No. 1 primetime program against households, viewers and all key male and adult demos the past two weeks, helping ESPN win the nights in all demographic audience categories among all networks, broadcast or cable.

HD VIEWING

High-Definition viewers are 65 percent more likely to say they watch high-def programming daily compared to two years ago. And males are more likely to watch than females.

That's according to a new study from **Knowledge Networks.**

The study, which surveyed the same 510 people ages 13 to 54 over two years, found that 43 percent say they now watch HD programming every day, compared to just 26 percent two years ago.

Additionally, about two-thirds of the respondents say they "always make the effort" to watch a show in HD when it is available in SD and HD at the same time.

But Knowledge also found some key viewing differences between males and females in HD viewing habits.

In the survey, males were more likely to say they check HD channels first when turning on their TV (48 percent to 19 percent for females.)

Males also were more likely to choose HD over standard-def when a program is available in both formats at the same time (Males: 58 percent to females 41 percent.) And 42 percent of males say they usually notice if a commercial is not in HD, compared to 20 percent of females.

Thirty-six percent of males are more likely to pay attention to the commercial if it's in HD, compared to 26 percent of females.

But the data did show that women are more likely to say that a HD commercial is "relevant to your needs and interests" by a margin of 42 percent to 31 percent for males.

"Viewing of high definition programming is becoming more frequent, including program types - such as how-to and news - we wouldn't have associated with HD a few years ago," said David Tice, Vice President and Group Account Director, Knowledge Networks. "This sends a message to advertisers that HD is becoming the new norm for those with HD access across all program types. An important learning for companies targeting products to men - who are more likely to seek out HD programming and to recognize the difference between standard and high-definition ads - is that creating advertising that is more relevant to the male audience could make you stand out from the HD crowd."

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PEN

Dear friends in WESA,

I have been a member of WESA since 1981, and there have been many times I have credited my WESA membership to my longevity in the electronics sales & service business. That is why I ran for State President in June. I want to continue giving back to WESA, and to hopefully revitalize the membership.

We all know times are tough, and technology is changing fast. We need to keep up with the changes to grow & prosper. That is one reason to belong to WESA. Over the years WESA has presented many worthwhile seminars which have taught me things from the latest technology, to management techniques.

WESA can still be a valuable asset to your business, but only if you are involved! Many times I have equated membership in WESA to being a member of a Church, you need to attend (functions, such as conventions and seminars) to benefit from your membership.

WESA is now in it's 51st year, and I believe the annual Conventions should continue. They are an opportunity to learn from one another, but also to renew lifelong friendships. I hope you are planning to attend next year's Convention in the Dells.

Have a great Thanksgiving & Christmas. I hope to see you at the Winter get-away.

Sincerely, Pete Kosovich

WESA State President

DID YOU KNOW?

An adult has fewer [bones](#) than a baby. We start off life with 350 bones, but because bones fuse together during growth, we end up with only 206 as adults.

NOBEL PRIZE

One of the recipients of this year's [Nobel Prize for Physics](#) was the researcher who figured out how to send wavelengths of light over long distances of fiber-optic cabling, thereby making high-speed cable and telco backbone networks possible (as well as fiber-to-the-home networks, like Verizon's FiOS).



In 1966, Charles K. Kao — then director of engineering at Standard Telecommunication Laboratories, in the U.K. — made a discovery that led to a breakthrough in fiber optics.

According to the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences' [announcement](#), Kao "carefully calculated how to transmit light over long distances via optical glass fibers. With a fiber of purest glass it would be possible to transmit light signals over 100 kilometers, compared to only 20 meters for the fibers available in the 1960s. Kao's enthusiasm inspired other researchers to share his vision of the future potential of fiber optics."

Kao's discovery led to the manufacture of the first ultrapure fiber four years later, in 1970, by Corning Glass Works. Kao, 75, was born in Shanghai and holds dual American and British citizenship. He retired in 1996.

If all the fiber-optic cables around the globe were stretched end to end, it would result in a single thread more than 1 billion kilometers long, according to the academy — enough to encircle the globe more than 25,000 times.

The other half of the \$1.4 million prize went to two Bell Labs researchers, Willard S. Boyle and George E. Smith, who invented an imaging semiconductor circuit, referred to as "the digital camera's electronic eye."

According to the [New York Times](#), in recent years the Nobel physics prize has veered "between perplexing, esoteric discoveries and more comprehensible technology developments." This year's honorees would fall in the latter category.

BLU-RAY 2010

Best Buy projects that 18.6 million Blu-ray players will be sold in 2010, according to Video Business.

The 18.6 million total would far exceed the likely sales total for 2009, which is expected to be approximately 10 million. (The numbers for both years include standalone Blu-ray players and Play Station 3 video game consoles, which include Blu-ray players inside.) If Best Buy is correct, the 2010 performance would be particularly impressive because 2009 sales figures are running about 112 percent better than 2008.

Blu-ray player sales now represent 66 percent of the retailer's home entertainment hardware category, compared to 35 percent two years ago, according to Video Business. Additionally, Blu-ray titles represent 25 percent of Best Buy's video software sales, compared to 13 percent two years ago.

🧨 Larry's Land Mines 🧨

YOU SHOULD TOO!

Many of you got smart, or got forced, into using a computer at work years ago. Finally you had a way to compile a list of your clients and the products you sold and serviced for them. You can also look up the dates these products were purchased or last serviced.

NOW. How many of you are smart enough to ask each and every client for their E-mail address? If you had a data base with that information you could easily send out information on the latest in technology, any specials your company is running or any sales events coming up in the future!

I started collecting E-mail addresses about two years ago. I promise that I wouldn't be sending my clients a bunch of stupid jokes. I was simply going to notify them as to any changes with the local digital stations, but instead I started :

KEMMER TV'S DIGITAL DIGEST

This is a newsletter that I E-mail and it allows me to keep in contact with my clients whenever I wish, without having to necessarily tell them about changes made to Milwaukee channels. Like this Newsletter I only send one out every 2 months or so.

I like to include articles like the one on page 8 because it is something most people would like to know but normally don't have access to.

You could start your own Newsletter for your business. This Newsletter is created with Microsoft Publisher. I know that some of you already have that program on your computers. If you don't it can be purchased for \$169. Once you set up your Newsletter it is just a matter of inserting new articles from issue to issue. You could even copy and paste articles from this newsletter into yours! Don't forget to change any newsletters from Microsoft publisher into a PDF before E-mailing.

How nice to be able to contact ALL your clients with just one mailing! You can even print a coupon in your Newsletter. I've even had a few clients that sent it to their friends and their friends E-mailed me to ask that they be put on the list for future issues.

I know that getting something like this started is a total pain in the butt but once you do, it is so easy to keep it going. Someone asked me what to do when business is quiet and the phones' not ringing. GET STARTED!

By the way... Channel 6 (Fox) in Milwaukee has finally finished the work on their tower. The old analog antenna has been removed from the top of the tower and the digital antenna, which was side mounted about 3/4 of the way, up is now on top.

Channel 4 says they don't have any money left in their budget to do that, and they may never do that for it would "only extend their coverage by a few miles."

WALMART INSTALLATION

Many consumers have been tempted to buy their favorite HDTV or Home Theater component at Wal-Mart because of the retailer's discounted prices.

However, unlike big electronic chains such as Best Buy, Wal-Mart has not offered a home installation service, which has been a drawback, particularly for customers who are not tech savvy.

But that is all changing now with Wal-Mart announcing that it's offering a installation service in partnership with the NEW Customer Service Companies Inc. The service will be available at all Wal-Mart stores in time for the holiday season, Reuters reports.

According to the news service, consumers can buy installation plans ranging from \$99 to \$399, which should cover the installation of a high-def set and/or a Home Theater.

The service also includes a consultation and tutorial after the installation is finished.

Best Buy said it was not concerned by Wal-Mart decision, however, because its installation service called the Geek Squad is done in-house.

"Geek Squad helps people with their PCs, TVs and other tech gear no matter where they bought their devices, so Wal-Mart customers can feel confident they can still depend on Geek Squad for tech support," Best Buy spokeswoman Paula Baldwin told Reuters.

HOLIDAY SALES

Analysts tracking the consumer TV industry are expecting aggressive holiday pricing to drive unit sales growth in some segments during the upcoming holiday selling season, particularly among models with 32-inch and smaller screen sizes and 40-inch-plus models priced less than \$1,000.

Most agree that the continuing economic tribulations will make for more frugal shoppers, but holiday gift buyers will still be hunting for TV bargains as they look to add secondary flat-panel HD sets to other rooms of the home or replace old analog models that were recently hooked up to set-top DTV converter boxes or digital TV services.

According to Riddhi Patel, iSuppli TV systems principal analyst, LCD TVs should see moderately strong sales during the fourth quarter, particularly in screen sizes ranging between 32 and 50 inches.

iSuppli's Patel is calling for 32-inch LCD TV prices to drop to as low as between \$299 and \$349 for Black Friday specials in some aggressive retail accounts.

In the 40-inch and larger range, Quixel's Pratt said to look for heavy activity in the 40-to-42-inch 1080p LCD TV class, "where it seems a given that the premium brands will have models priced at \$649, and we are expecting \$599 where retailers want to put more skin in the game."

"In the 46/47 segment, premium brands will be offered up at \$799 to \$899," she continued. "Also expect LCD TV values at 60-inch this year. For the solid brands who already offer these prices, we may see additional discounts in these larger screen

sizes vs. the 32-inch class."

As for sales of plasma sets, DisplaySearch's Gagnon said sales are currently steady at around 10 percent of the TV market.

As for step-up TV promotions, Patel said that in the 40-inch range, LED backlit LCD TVs will be pushed heavily by both the brands and retailers.

"Also, brands will continue to focus on Internet connectivity in TVs as well as bundled deals like Blu-ray Disc players with TVs, audio systems with TVs, game consoles with TVs or even free installation with TVs along with aggressive pricing," she said.

Quixel's Pratt also said that the Connected TV revolution seems to be catching on with consumers.

"There has been significant media attention and publicity around Connected TVs — more manufacturers are including widgets, RSS features and so forth, and Quixel has seen the number of units sold double each quarter," she said. "In fact, in the large area display market (all display technologies above 40 inches), connected TV sales are tracking at 17 percent of the total and we expect share to top 20 percent for 2009.

"When looking at the total LCD TV category, connected TV sales will account for 9 percent of the total category and 28 percent of the PDP category," Pratt predicted.

Patel of iSuppli said Internet-enabled TVs are currently being pushed by brands more than retailers.

"iSuppli believes that Internet-enhanced TV (IETV) connectivity features will be added to new sets rapidly and penetration rates will be high, but whether consumers actually use the feature or not is another story," she said.

The biggest concern with IETV connectivity is bringing Ethernet cables from the Internet router to the TV, Patel said. She said that IETV set sales currently represent about 20 percent of flat-panel TV purchases (LCD and plasma models included).

Patel said she is looking for an increased push on IPTV products from brands over the holiday selling season.

"There will be increased marketing dollars spent on the same to increase consumer awareness. While marketing is a key to increase awareness, it will depend on the user interface and ease of use from consumer perspective for adoption of this feature," she offered.

Once again the brand-share war in flat-panel TV marketing will be waged at the top with tier one brands offering prices that appear to present the highest value to consumers, analysts said.

"Japanese brands who've been hit with major profit losses this last year will be conservative while Korean and Chinese brands will be most aggressive," predicted Gagnon. "It will be challenging for everyone though to go deep on price cuts for a wide range of models or on high volume deals since the production costs have risen a lot recently due to panel price increases for LCD."

Second-tier lines with very competitive opening price points will do well as well, they predict.

TWICE



THE BUSINESS PAGE



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How great is that? This is nationwide and it is absolutely free! Works on cell and landline phones... **NESDANET**

WHICH CARS GET TICKETS?

A yearlong study identifies the vehicle -- and it's a big one -- whose drivers get ticketed the most. The research suggests that what you drive may indicate how you drive.

Drivers of Hummer SUVs were 4.63 times more likely to get a traffic ticket than the average driver, concludes a yearlong study by a company that helps insurers identify risks.

ISO Quality Planning, the San Francisco company that studied the records of 1.7 million drivers, compiled a list of ticket magnets that confirmed some long-held notions: Owners of the 507-horsepower Mercedes-Benz CLS63 AMG and similarly muscular CLK63 AMG received outsized numbers of tickets, as did the generally young owners of the relatively inexpensive Scion tC, xB and xA, and the Audi A4 sports sedan.

But also on that most-ticketed list were the Subaru Outback and the Toyota Camry Solara and Matrix, three cars not known for great speed or expressing the rebellious nature of their owners. Meanwhile, the Chevrolet Tahoe and Suburban, virtually identical mechanically to their General Motors sibling Hummer, appeared on the least-ticketed list.

Sharing the bottom of the list? Buicks, minivans and pickups

MSN Money staff

HOLIDAY INN MANITOWOC

Mark your calendars for January 30 & 31 2010 for the annual Mid-Winter-Getaway. Once again they will stick to the old pricing of \$70 single/double.

Hospitality room will also be "comped" if we get enough people to come. Highways I-43 and 151, exit 149.

Check in at 3:00 and check out at 12:00. 1-920-682-6000

SMART METERS

After 100 years, the lowly utility meter is poised for a digital upgrade, with the installation of up to 250 million expected over the next six years, according to a new forecast.

Pike Research published on Monday a research report on smart meters that predicts installation to ramp up at a 19 percent annual rate through 2015.

Smart meters use wireless networking to shuttle information back and forth between utilities and customers. So far, the communications link has been used mainly to report back usage for monthly billing, but there are new applications aimed at efficiency.

Consumers can, in some cases, get a real-time read-out of electricity consumption or see a graph of a full day's use. Smart meters are also designed to help consumers take advantage of off-peak rates. Utilities are generally interested in moving usage to off-peak times and running power plants more efficiently.

A person could, for example, schedule a dishwasher to run or charge a plug-in vehicle in the middle of the night. Information from the smart meter signals when cheaper rates are in effect.

Pike's forecast notes that the push to smart meters is global, driven by government interest in energy efficiency. The U.S. Department of Energy's smart-grid grant program announced last week is expected to result in 18 million smart meter installations across the nation. About 3.5 percent of the world's meters can be considered "smart," with the number set to grow to 18 percent by 2015.

CNET

TOO LOUD!

The TV-broadcast industry is expected to take a major step toward solving the loudness problem next week, when members of the ATSC are expected to approve ATSC Loudness Recommended Practices (RP). The practices will be known as ATSC A/85 and will give TV stations and networks more guidance, so that programs and interstitials have more-consistent loudness levels both within a station's DTV signal and between one channel and the next.

Jim Starzynski, who led the Loudness Group that defined the practices and is principal engineer and audio architect of NBC Universal, discussed the ATSC's progress this week at the SMPTE Tech Conference in Hollywood. The approval of an RP comes just in time for the industry, as lawmakers in Washington have taken the issue into their own hands with the CALM (Commercial Advertising Loudness Mitigation) Act. The Act, sponsored by Rep. Anna Eschoo (D-CA), currently sits as an active bill with the House of Representatives telecommunications subcommittee. And given the public's hatred of loud commercials, it is expected to pass easily.

The problem of loudness has become more pronounced for TV stations, networks, and viewers now that the transition to DTV is complete. Analog broadcast signals were not robust enough to deliver an audio signal with a tremendously wide dynamic range. But digital signals can have a dynamic range as wide as 100 dB. "You need to monitor the audio well to deliver an audio experience that customers are used to," says Starzynski.

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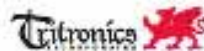
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WHAT'S AN LED TV

When a product has become commoditized and its price is regularly dropping and its profit margins are getting ever-thinner, how can a company boost its sales and raise its prices?

Samsung 8000 Series LED TV One way is by changing the product's name.

That's what Samsung has done with its new line of LCD TVs using LEDs to illuminate the screen. In its print advertising and on its Web site, Samsung calls the new range simply "LED TVs."

They are not LED TVs. Calling them such makes as much sense as calling its existing line of LCD televisions Cold Cathode Fluorescent Lamp TVs, or CCFL TVs, after the lighting technology that they use.

Whatever its validity, Samsung's decision to drop "LCD" was a smart marketing move. After all, "LED" is the acronym du jour, a technology that's all the rage as a new, perhaps revolutionary lighting source. It's as emotive a term as "HDTV" and "digital" were in their heydays.

But it's also confusing consumers. An industry colleague told me that in a recent trip to a big-box retailer, he overheard several friends asking what type of TV they were watching. One said it wasn't LCD or plasma, it was an LED set.

More accurately, it was an expensive LCD set. LED-backlit LCD TVs can cost as much as twice their standard LCD or plasma counterparts. Is the extra money worth it, even if you can afford it?

Here are the answers to some questions you may have about LCD TVs using LED backlighting.

What's wrong with existing LCD TVs?

Up until now, LCDs used fluorescent tubes to light the screen. As a result, LCDs have trouble creating deep blacks. That's because fluorescent tubes are always on, and some light leaks through to the front of the display even when a part of the image is supposed to be black. A lack of deep blacks reduces the perceived sharpness of the set's image.

Also, fluorescents lack a wide range of colors; hence, color saturation is limited.

What's an LED TV?

It's an LCD TV that uses LEDs to illuminate the display. There are two ways to do this: either by placing LEDs across the entire back of the display, or by placing LEDs just around the perimeter, which is called an "edge lit" display. Both techniques use less power than plasma TVs and LCD TVs lit with fluorescent tubes.

Which technique is better?

They both have their pros and cons. LCD TVs using edge-lit LCDs can be ultra-thin, because the LED sources are on the side. Edge-lit LED-lit LCDs are also less expensive than LCD TVs using LED backlit technology.

On the other hand, LCD TVs that use LEDs across the rear of the display can create sharply deeper blacks, through a technique called "local dimming." When a scene calls for a dark image, the LEDs in that area can be shut off completely, so no light leaks through what should look black.

So if I want an LED-lit LCD, I should buy one using back-lit technology?

It's not so simple. An LED back-lit TV may contain only about 1,000 LEDs. And those LEDs can only be dimmed in large groups, because it is too expensive to control each LED individually. So when you shut off or dim a group of LEDs you may also be darkening part of an adjoining scene on the TV that really should be bright. If you cut back on the dimming, then the blacks will be less dark than blacks in another part of the image that are not surrounded by lighter images.

Theoretically, you could increase the number of LEDs so that each lit just one pixel on the 2 million pixel LCD screen. But then you could just throw away the LCD screen because you would have actually created an LED television — just like the Walgreens LED sign in Times Square.

O.K., but still, LCD TVs with LEDs have great contrast

Sometimes they do. It depends on what you're watching. As a Samsung engineer recently said to me, "the most dramatic effect of LED-lit TVs happens when the entire scene goes to black" — not necessarily when you're watching a scene with a mixture of light and dark images.

Do LED-lit LCD TVs produce better pictures than plasma TVs?

Interestingly, I've heard no one in the industry claim that they do. At best, they say that with LED-lit LCD TVs, plasma no longer has an edge when it comes to creating deep blacks and saturated colors. But plasma still has a big edge when it comes to price.

How much more do LED-lit LCD TVs actually cost?

Right now, a lot. But that should change as more companies enter the market. The list price for Samsung's 46-inch high-end LED-lit LCD TV, model UN46B8000, is \$3,200. But its larger 50-inch plasma high-end model, the PN50B860, is \$800 cheaper.

Later this year, LG will introduce two new series of LED LCD TVs, in 42-, 47-, and 55-inch screen sizes; all sets will use backlit LED technology. Prices have not been announced.

Not surprisingly, Vizio has just broken the LED price barrier. On Monday, the company announced that beginning this September it would ship the VF551XVT, a 55-inch LCD model using LED backlighting. The price: \$2,200, or \$1,000 less than Samsung's smaller 46-inch LED-lit television. It looks like Samsung's strategy to make its LED-based LCD TVs a premium product may have a short life

By Eric A. Taub New York Times