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## WEBSITES: IN FOCUS

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### How 4 sites can achieve their full potential

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##### Entertainment: **Bravotv.com**

Douglas Rushkoff, a popular media pundit, says, "Content is just a medium for interaction between people." Today, that's especially true, and it's changing the face of entertainment. Reality TV, YouTube, Facebook status messages -- it's all entertainment. The boundaries between television and the internet are blurring. Content is found on multiple screens, travels between them and grows from them.

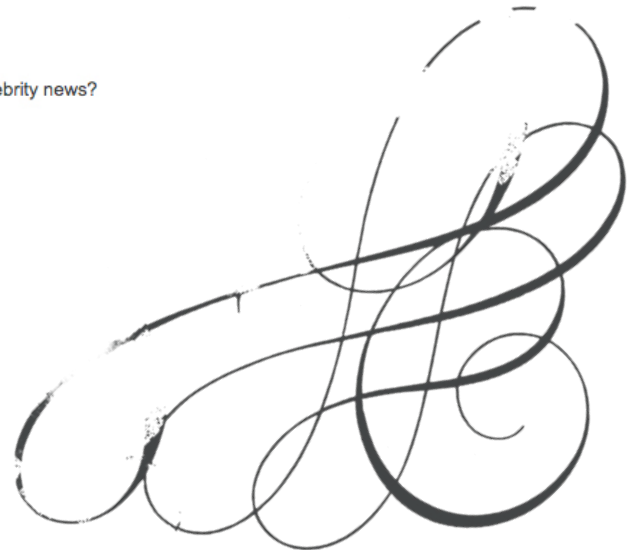
So, studying today's entertainment sites to see how well they are leveraging their content as a medium was a fun exercise. (Plus, we are TV junkies!) **Bravo** is a particular favorite of ours. As a network, it has really understood the power of content in creating culture, from the early days of "Queer Eye" to people's current fascination with "Project Runway." However, the network's site experience does little to celebrate or champion the fact that the power of content goes well beyond the screen.



Consider the following points.

#### 1. First off, information overload!

There's simply too much going on. Do I want to see the latest celebrity news? Read a blog? Do I care?



There's a simple fact when it comes to TV: People love shows, not networks. Yet, the navigation of this site is centered on the network and leaves the shows in the dust. Why not consider visual navigation that ignites people's love of Bravo TV? In other words, transfer the language of TV to the online space.

Imagine a page where the show is the entry point and the user can navigate from there. As content is playing, the site could provide extended content that's relevant: access points to relevant blogs, user comments, latest news, polls, trivia and games -- all in the context of the shows users love. Right now, those things are all just lost because they're just one of many things. The site should take the opportunity to show highlights that serve as tomorrow's water cooler talk.

### 2. Where's the brand?

This site is an opportunity to further audience engagement in the Bravo experience. To many, Bravo has built a brand for affluent, educated adults who dig culture -- from lifestyle, design and fashion to celebrity life, real estate and beyond. It's high-end reality TV. The visual aesthetic on the site, on the other hand, feels low-brow. It doesn't feel as rich as the actual content experience, which has the power to suck people in for hours. (Yes, you know you've found yourself lost for hours, eyes glued to the "Real Housewives" marathon.)

On a basic aesthetic level, the site's colors are flat, lightweight and distract from the content. The Bravo TV site should feel high-end -- perhaps through an industrial design motif that lets the creativity of the show speak for itself.

### 3. Where's the interaction and social currency?

Bravo has created a cultural phenomenon -- brands, in and of their own rights, that people love to talk about. Yet, there's no clear role for conversation or participation here. Chats exist but are buried. I don't clearly understand where I can go deeper into the rabbit hole, learning and interacting more. Where can I chat with others and share thoughts?

The CBS site has a great feature where during "Survivor" playbacks, you can see the others who are watching with you and you can interact with the screen, throwing tomatoes at people or posting hearts on characters you like. It's a simple idea, and with Bravo's properties, that passion could really come out. The site should give people the opportunity to connect their TV and online experiences.

### 4. What's more important, the advertiser or the people?

We saved this for the end, but it was actually the first thing we noticed: The ad space is more front and center than the shows. The ad square in the middle of the page is an eyesore and a distraction from why I would visit the site anyway.

We understand that marketing support is important, but why not find a way to better integrate the space in more contextually relevant ways? The mechanism for TV advertising -- content for 12 minutes then ads for 90 seconds -- is expected. Annoying, but accepted. Thus, on its site, Bravo may want to consider using an episode player that allows it to strategically place ads before the content, thus forcing the user to view the ads before enjoying Bravo content. That's what MSNBC does with its video player. Bravo may also want to consider a player that allows it to serve contextually relevant ads as certain content is discussed. In short, Bravo needs to develop its own player and give it a branding and interaction design that truly champions the brand.

Bravo has a great, unique brand, and we believe there is so much more the online experience can deliver.

Now, off to catch up on "Rachel Zoe".

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