

Dissatisfaction with local TV services

 By [Chris Brewer](#)

26 Sep 2017

When I wrote last week about declining audiences and poor customer support in the TV industry, I didn't expect the deluge of sympathetic complaints I received - nor how upset a lot of viewers really are.

Some people are quite angry, you know.



Are TV audiences declining?

Chris Brewer 18 Sep 2017



There were lots of them writing to me about the SABC – specifically the licence fee they have to pay for a service they never use. Many complained about the apparently disgraceful way our national broadcaster wastes so much of our money.

Many seem to confirm that broadcasters must be extremely concerned about the (fairly obvious) looming of the internet as a competitor. I would certainly be very worried indeed.

One of my long standing friends made the following comment:

“ I was happy with DStv with the original old box plus the new(then) HD box. Then a rep phoned and convinced me that I should upgrade to the newExplora package. Oh dear. I really should have learned to read the small print. Now, instead of being able to record three programmes simultaneously I can only record one; if I want to watch a recording in my office, my wife can't watch her tennis in the TV room. And now, it seems as they've done away with Dish (the magazine), which for all its mistakes was a useful guide for the month's viewing. Wouldn't take much to get me to switch to a better option. ”

My sentiments exactly. You'd think they'd be trying hard to impress their subscribers instead of alienating them.

And the comments about scheduling! Some of the language almost made me blush. Surely there's a better way than simply re-running outdated series and movies? I thought that even the quiz programmes I like watching were coming up with the wrong answers, until I realised they were recorded more than six years ago!

As I mentioned before, there is no reliable research, yet published, to monitor TV viewership – but I'm assured it's about to

happen. However, if it's funded by the TV stations themselves, then the results may very well be perfidious.

Well, we'll see.

It's true, our TV services leave a lot to be desired – I think most people would agree with that. Shame, really.

But when I add up what it costs me to watch the little screen, I'm quite horrified. Licence, subscriptions, replacing defunct electronics (very few seem to use the term “planned obsolescence” which, as Wikipedia reminds us: “...is a policy of planning or designing a product with an artificially limited useful life, so it will become obsolete [that is, unfashionable or no longer functional] after a certain period of time.”)

I first read Vance Packard (I think it was him, anyway) discussing this potential development several decades ago and thought to myself at the time, “that's ridiculous and will never be allowed!” How wrong I was.



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Anyway, it's a fairly bleak future for entertainment in my opinion. Maybe I'll just throw the lot away and take up knitting.

Or perhaps return to the old and reliable journals and magazines?

Just thinking.

ABOUT CHRIS BREWER

Having joined the ad industry in London, Chris Brewer spent most of his career in media analysis and planning - but has performed just about every advertising task from Creative to Research. He's an honorary lifetime member of the Advertising Media Association and regularly advises agencies and clients regarding their media plan costs and strategies. He is also often asked to talk at industry functions. Email: chris@brewers.co.za. Twitter: [@brewersapps](#). Read his blog: www.brewersdroop.co.za

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