

MEDIA & ICT CONSUMPTION TRENDS

“TWITTER ACTIVITY NOT RELATED WITH HIGHER TV VIEWING RATES”

The top 10 trending Twitter hashtags in Flanders all referred to local TV shows. This figure suggests that Twitter performs an important role as second screen. When watching TV, people have their smartphone or tablet within reach to comment on TV shows. The 2014 iMinds digiMeter indicated that a quarter of all Flemish people regularly shares his/her opinion about the program being watched. Twitter activity represents an unprecedented source for program makers and broadcasters who benefit from **encouraging Twitter activity by displaying program hashtags**.

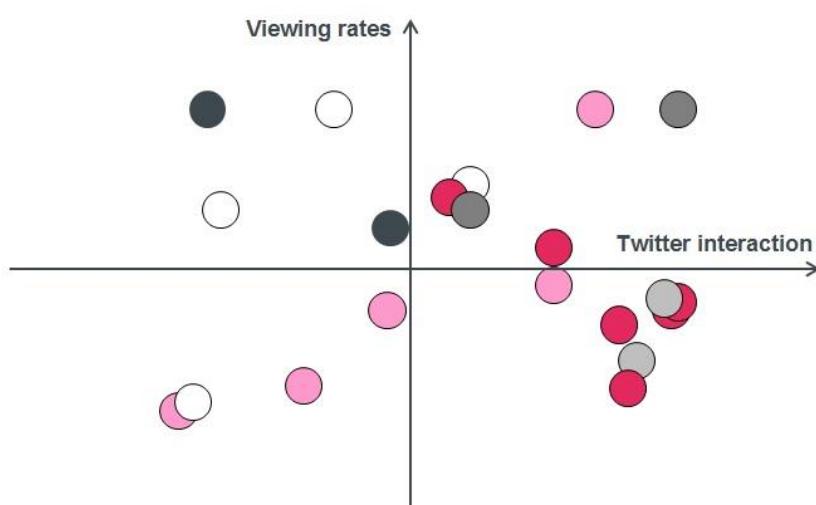
But what about the relationship between Twitter activity and viewing rates? Does increased Twitter activity lead to higher ratings, or is it rather the other way around? Or is there no link at all? Our study, in collaboration with iMinds-Multimedia Lab, compared Twitter traffic (# hashtags) with official CIM TV ratings and concluded there is **no relationship between the number of tweets and number of viewers**. In total, over twenty programs of various genres were included in the analysis. But differences were found between different program genres.

Comedy shows and current affairs programs generate considerable Twitter activity though they are less popular in terms of ratings. Their Twitter traction suggests social media buzz does not require high ratings. These programs attract rather small audiences but have niche popularity. For low rating shows, **analysis of Twitter traffic may provide new insights as these viewers are slightly underrepresented in traditional rating figures**.

News programs show a strikingly different pattern. Highly ranked in the rating lists, but these programmes generate low Twitter activity. The fact that news programs hardly create **Twitter interaction does not imply viewers are not engaged** with them. Research shows people tend to stick to news programs as a daily ritual and often consider them the start of evening viewing.

Finally, TV shows such as *The Voice* successfully bet on social media and manage to engage with a significant part of the audience using social media. Hence, a **sophisticated social media strategy seems to pay off**. Twitter gives a particular view on what the audience thinks, likes and dislikes. Though a social media strategy remains a challenge for most programs, Twitter activity analysis combined with ratings provides detailed insights into transforming viewing patterns, which could be used to effectively implement interactive strategies, insert targeted advertising, refine programming schedules and so much more.

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Shows with high ratings do not automatically get social media traction

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Twitter has a sensory value: it signals what the audience thinks, likes and dislikes

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Media & ICT Consumption Trends is a partnership between iMinds Research Center Media & ICT (iMinds-MICT) and digital research institute iMinds. The project seeks to provide an overview of academic research in Flemish media and internet consumption, and links insights into transforming audiences to the current challenges for the Flemish media industries. It therefore combines results from original user-driven innovation research with conclusions from international studies and technology trends reports.

Series Editors: Tom Evens, Bart Vanhaelewyn and Lieven De Marez

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(2015-2) **Twitter activity not related with higher TV viewing rates**

Research Center **Media & ICT (iMinds-MICT)** is affiliated to Ghent University, part of the Flemish digital research center and business incubator iMinds, and forms, together with SMIT and CUO, the research department iMinds-Digital Society. The context and focus of MICT's research is today's digital society and innovation economy, and more specifically the changes and challenges that are imposed by that environment for each of its stakeholders: industry, policy makers and, not the least, end-users.

iMinds is Flanders' digital research center and business incubator, established by the Flemish government in 2004. Building on the expertise of our 850+ top researchers located at 5 Flemish universities, it introduces digital innovation in 6 key markets including Media, ICT and Smart Cities. iMinds collaborates with research partners to convert digital knowhow into real-life products and services that change people's lives for the better. Key asset is an agile, open research mind set and proven methodology.
