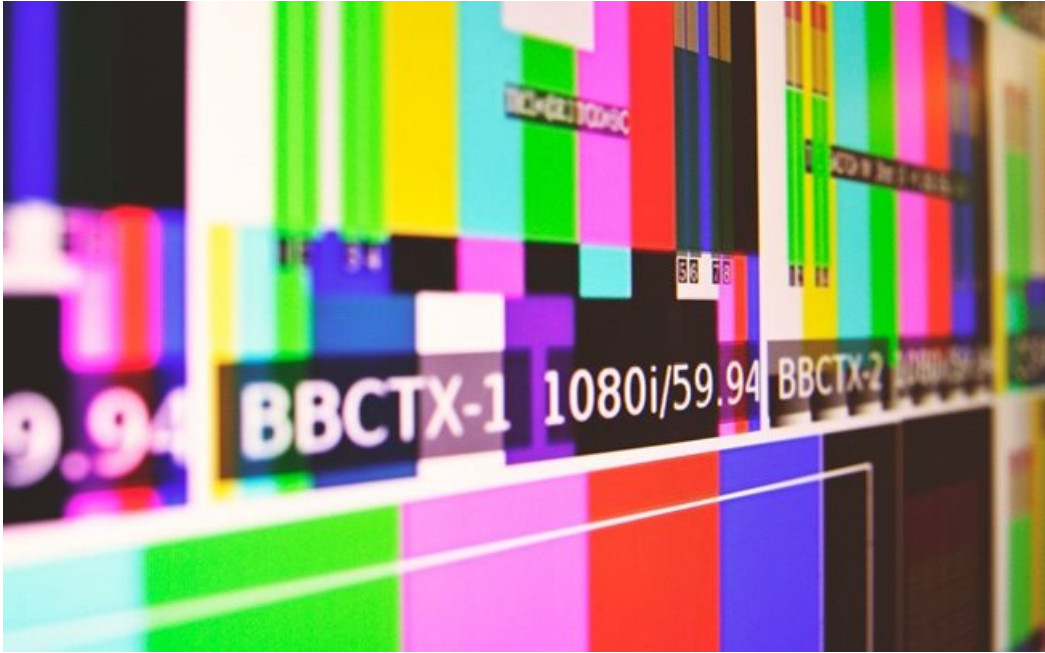


# The evolving face of TV

By [Claire Herman](#)

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Following the recent deaths of Betty White and Bob Saget, I was taken back to the "early days" of television, where we waited impatiently for the evening's shows to start for our weekly dose of family favourites, such as the *Golden Girls* and *Full House*.



Source: [www.pexels.com](http://www.pexels.com)

How we loved sitting down and watching these shows together - it was a real treat to eat dinner in front of the TV, and if you needed anything from the kitchen, you had to wait for the ad break, and then it was a mad dash to run there and back in time so that you didn't miss anything.

This got me thinking about how TV has shifted immensely since I was a kid, and how my own children cannot understand what life was like "back in the day"...

They cannot comprehend actually waiting to watch the next episode, they watch more YouTube than normal TV, and I have to keep on reminding them that when we are watching broadcast TV with ads they will watch them because they "pay the bills"! It all boils down to two fundamental shifts - Access and Choice.

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## Access

Looking at access, remember that annoying test pattern when television was only broadcast between 5 and 9 pm in the evening? And what about M-Net's Open Time? Now we can tune in 24/7, with literally no time limit.

Platforms such as Catch-Up and access to streaming services also means that you don't have to wait a week to get your fix of the latest series and gone are the days of setting your VHS recorder if you weren't going to be in that night. We no longer have to plan our lives around the TV schedule, which, by the way, was published in the *Tonight* section of the daily newspaper and even in an actual stand-alone printed magazine.

Access also speaks to where and when we watch TV. In the old days, if you were fortunate enough to have a television there was generally only one set per household - typically in the living room. Now having multiple TV's per home is quite common, and you can watch on your mobile, tablet and laptop - all at once if you like! Moreover, smart TV's and services such as DStv's Explora Ultra have just made ease of access effortless, with every available platform at your fingertips at the click of a button.

I remember a time when restaurants installed TV sets at their tables so that people could go out on a Tuesday night and still catch *Dallas*. This evolved into the rise of the sports bar and community centres where on-premise TV viewing ensured that you were entertained with friends and family outside of your home, especially for sports viewing.

Fast forward to today with streaming and the speed of social media, to avoid spoilers and to stay on top of the latest conversations, on-demand binge-watching is the order of the day. Yes, Covid-19 accelerated this behaviour, but our viewing patterns are forever changed.

So what has Access meant for the media planning and advertising world? Cherry-picking spots with predictable schedules has morphed into more of a dynamic planning scenario, with packages and CPP deals becoming more popular. And now with the rollout of DTT (Digital Terrestrial Television), in the near future, programmatic TV planning will be made possible and we will be able to switch campaigns on and off effortlessly, targeting specific sub-segments as opposed to "everyone".

In addition, time-shifted viewing has opened up a new platform of alternative opportunities to engage with our audiences, and second-screening has meant that digital integration is absolutely necessary to consider in campaign scheduling.

## More choice

And what about choice? In the good old days, we had SABC 1, 2 and 3, and if you positioned your TV's bunny ears just right, you may have been lucky enough to catch some Bop TV. Then we saw the launch of M-Net and e.tv and subsequently DStv and OpenView HD - we were spoilt for choice!

If that wasn't enough, we wanted more, and now we have DStv Now, Showmax, Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, BritBox and Viu, plus whatever you can search for on YouTube, with Disney+ and HBO Max launching in South Africa this year. The power of content choice has shifted from the broadcaster to the viewer - we can literally choose what we watch when we watch, and where we watch, and audiences can also choose not to watch your ads...



Disney+ is coming to South Africa this Winter

26 Jan 2022



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Beyond channel choice, the amount of content is staggering - I really can't keep up with the latest and hottest series, never mind trying to find the time to watch it all. Despite my best intentions, I'm probably the only person on the planet that still hasn't watched *Game of Thrones* and *Squid Game*!

So again linking choice back to the media world, even though this is quite a top-end perspective, audience fragmentation is a reality and it is becoming increasingly difficult to reach our target markets with standard TV buys. Digital integration, sponsorships, content creation and the likes are all viable ways to expose our brands to our markets, but once we get them, then what? Today more than ever it is about meaningful and authentic engagement opportunities if we are going to win. Remember: the power is in their hands, not yours.

Despite this evolving landscape, thanks to streaming I still get to watch the oldies such as the *Golden Girls* and *Full House*, and have even introduced my kids to some of my other old-time favourites, like *Chuck* and *The Gummi Bears*. It's now just easier to pop to the kitchen to fill up my wine glass without missing a thing.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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