



Social media gave a large boost to X Factor's audience engagement

Seven years into its history, *The X Factor* and social media are highly entwined

The *X Factor* final might have attracted 20m TV viewers but our survey of fans shows that these audience figures are only half the story. We surveyed 1,500 viewers to find out how they interact with the show and to understand what makes up the *X Factor* experience for them. The results show that seven years into its history, the show and social media are highly entwined, as viewers turn to the likes of Facebook and Twitter to share the experience with their friends and the wider public.

The X Factor is a viewing experience that extends far beyond the room in which people are watching it in on TV. 26% use Twitter or Facebook to follow the judges and contestants, join fan groups or post updates as the drama

unfolds. The usual trends about participation in social media activities apply, with those aged 18-34 most likely to participate in this way (43%), compared to 16% of those aged over 35.

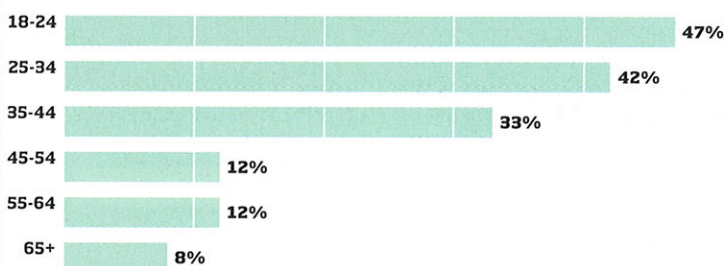
The buzz around the show's personalities shows a strong correlation to the media frenzy offline: Cheryl Cole is the most followed judge, by 12% of those who follow anyone from the show. In contrast, interest in the contestants is more muted. Cher Lloyd topped the list at 8%, but there was little marked difference in the popularity of the contestants.

While using social media gives viewers an opportunity to extend their *X Factor* experience, activity is typically concentrated around the weekend shows. 20% of those we sampled have commented about the show on Facebook during its transmission, rising to 39% of women aged 18-34. At 21%, men in the same age group are nearly half as likely to engage via Facebook. Live chat was a new feature of the show last year, with almost 1m viewers using the service.

High levels of stickiness and sustained interaction with the show may be contributing to a higher level of engagement among viewers, but for a show that's entirely commercial in its nature, the need to translate buzz into revenue is a priority. Another new feature for 2010 was the number of viewers downloading performances from iTunes. This was relatively high at just over one in ten, rising to 20% of those aged 18-34.

This may have been the year when *The X Factor's* presence online began to match its offline profile, but the challenge in future years will be to improve the ratio of online buzz to revenue opportunities.

Users who have discussed *The X Factor* online while watching on TV By age



source: Brand Driver

next week Harvind Bhatti, Global Reviews