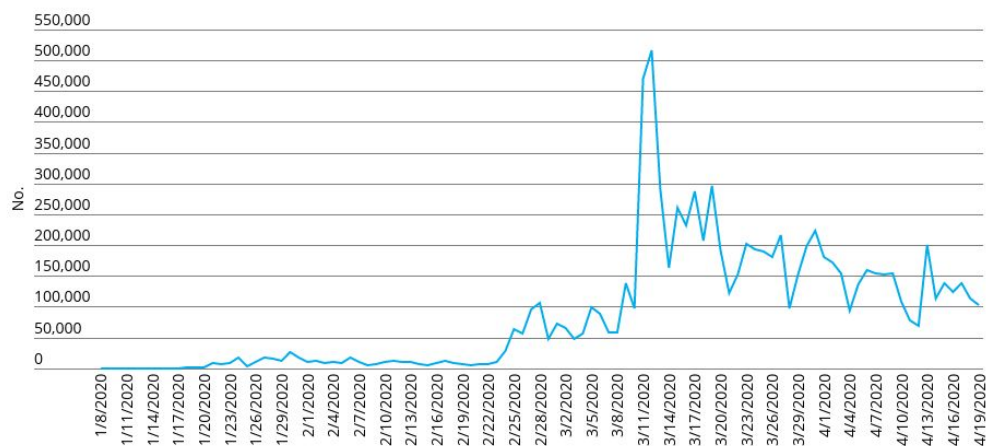


SOCIALLY CONNECTED WHILE PHYSICAL DISTANCING THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON SOCIAL TV

For years, consumers have turned to TV during times of crisis—to stay apprised of information or simply to lean into the power of entertainment and escape. It's no different during COVID-19 as media consumption has continued to increase among home-bound consumers who have taken a very real step back from social gatherings, according to [recent Nielsen research](#). In 2020, we see this trend reflected in a deluge of social media activity about TV programs as consumers lean into the power of technology not just to view or listen, but to also fill a need to stay connected to friends, family and the world at large.

And, according to a recent Nielsen study on social behavior as it pertains to the TV, as consumers keep close to home and to their TV sets, they're using social media to stay connected now more than ever. The study found that the total volume of TV and COVID-19-related conversations on Twitter alone reached nearly 9 million since the start of 2020 in the U.S.—a staggering 40X increase between January and March amid the peak novelty of the coronavirus pandemic.

NUMBER OF TV TWEETS MENTIONING COVID-19 OR CORONAVIRUS



Read as: From Jan. 1, 2020- April 19, 2020 there were 891,0490 TV Tweets mentioning the coronavirus or COVID-19.

Source: Nielsen Social Content Ratings.

As more consumers shelter in their homes, they're turning to social media to pass the time. And audiences have a lot to say about the new TV, streaming, and movie options at their fingertips. Despite there being a relatively consistent number of programs on air year over year, we're seeing a sizable jump in social media activity across most TV genres. As expected, we see the biggest upticks in social buzz about talk and news programs, family movies and all streaming services.

VOLUME OF SOCIAL TV ACTIVITY: SPRING 2019 VS. SPRING 2020



Entertainment Series and Movies		
Dates	No. of Programs	Total Social Interactions
3/1/19 - 4/15/19	550	96,109,425
3/1/20 - 4/15/20	574	98,355,389
% Change		+2%

Hispanic Entertainment		
Dates	No. of Programs	Total Social Interactions
3/1/19 - 4/15/19	27	2,743,071
3/1/20 - 4/15/20	60	2,118,844
% Change		-23%

Primetime Talk & News		
Dates	No. of Programs	Total Social Interactions
3/1/19 - 4/15/19	55	12,295,554
3/1/20 - 4/15/20	63	14,441,885
% Change		+17%

Hispanic Talk & News		
Dates	No. of Programs	Total Social Interactions
3/1/19 - 4/15/19	30	13,226,546
3/1/20 - 4/15/20	34	22,595,250
% Change		+71%

Children & Family Movies		
Dates	No. of Programs	Total Social Interactions
3/1/19 - 4/15/19	68	543,644
3/1/20 - 4/15/20	79	3,740,709
% Change		*588%

Streaming Services		
Dates	No. of Programs	Total Social Interactions
3/1/19 - 4/15/19	125	71,841,480
3/1/20 - 4/15/20	125	108,992,501
% Change		52%

Source: Nielsen Social Content Ratings. Live/new, linear and 24/7, 3/1/19-4/15/19 and 3/1/20-4/15/20.

But there is a glaring exception: live sports broadcasts. Recent suspensions and cancellation of major events like the NBA Finals, the Masters and the 2020 Olympics, have impacted sports enthusiasts of all kinds. But marketers and brands looking to connect with home-bound sports fans can keep tabs on their non-sports preferences using real-world social media behavior alongside Nielsen intel around [Heavy Sports Viewers](#).

Now more than ever it is important for brands to find the right audiences, set the right tone and prepare for the future. Sports-heavy networks and advertisers have an opportunity to find aligned audiences in other TV programming and ride the momentum of recent increases in TV consumption. The overlap in social TV audiences is a way to identify and keep track of what these social sports fans are watching and talking about at scale.

Sports networks and brands can look to the large footprint of social affinity data between sports fans and other TV programming to identify where to place ads in the absence of live sports content. Nielsen data shows that sports fans are flocking to sports adjacent documentaries across the board, as well as comedies. However, networks and brands can dive deeper to look at league audiences and the TV programs that niche fans are highly aligned with. This gives marketers and brands the knowledge for more finely tuned advertising strategies based on demonstrated behaviors on social media about TV.

SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT: THE SHOWS SPORTS FANS ARE TWEETING ABOUT DURING THE PANDEMIC



Linear TV

NBA Basketball

Rank	Network	Program	Genre	TV Uniques	Affinity Share
1	Food Network	Man v. Food	Docs & Special Interests	4,264	84.78%
2	NBC	The Wall	Game Show Series	5,828	80.11%
3	The CW	DC's Legends of Tomorrow	Drama Series	35,729	70.32%
4	Showtime	Desus & Mero	Talk & News	24,377	70.12%
5	VH1	Nick Cannon Presents: Wild 'n Out	Comedy Series	56,027	65.37%

NASCAR Cup Series

Rank	Network	Program	Genre	TV Uniques	Affinity Share
1	A&E	Live PD: Wanted	Docs & Special Interests	6,270	13.29%
2	FOX Business Network	America Works Together	Talk & News	5,604	12.74%
3	FOX	Last Man Standing	Comedy Series	3,974	11.32%
4	Discovery	Deadliest Catch	Docs & Special Interests	2,839	11.13%
5	A&E	Live PD: Roll Call	Docs & Special Interests	18,833	11.03%

NHL Hockey

Rank	Network	Program	Genre	TV Uniques	Affinity Share
1	Food Network	Man v. Food	Docs & Special Interests	4,264	57.04%
2	Spike	Bar Rescue	Docs & Special Interests	4,218	41.39%
3	FOX News Channel	The Next Revolution With Steve Hilton	Talk & News	8,873	40.40%
4	FOX News Channel	The Greg Gutfeld Show	Talk & News	25,822	39.11%
5	FOX Business Network	Varney & Company	Talk & News	17,567	38.30%

MLB Baseball

Rank	Network	Program	Genre	TV Uniques	Affinity Share
1	Food Network	Man v. Food	Docs & Special Interests	4,264	45.24%
2	FOX Business Network	Cavuto: Coast to Coast	Talk & News	14,483	30.92%
3	FOX Business Network	Making Money With Charles Payne	Talk & News	36,382	28.90%
4	FOX Business Network	Varney & Company	Talk & News	17,567	28.47%
5	The CW	DC's Legends of Tomorrow	Drama Series	35,729	28.46%

MLS Soccer

Rank	Network	Program	Genre	TV Uniques	Affinity Share
1	NBC	The Wall	Game Show Series	5,828	9.25%
2	UniMás	Me caigo de risa	Comedy Series	5,274	6.39%
3	The CW	DC's Legends of Tomorrow	Drama Series	35,729	6.24%
4	Univision	Hoy	Talk & News	4,896	6.07%
5	ABC	Who Wants to Be a Millionaire	Game Show Series	4,868	5.79%

Streaming

NBA Basketball

Rank	Network	Program	Genre	TV Uniques	Affinity Share
1	Netflix	Last Chance U	Docs & Special Interests	10,258	77.61%
2	Netflix	When They See Us	Drama Series	17,367	57.38%
3	Netflix	#blackaf	Comedy Series	14,399	55.73%
4	Netflix	Dirty Money	Docs & Special Interests	35,148	54.65%
5	Netflix	Narcos: Mexico	Drama Series	11,319	54.52%

NASCAR

Rank	Network	Program	Genre	TV Uniques	Affinity Share
1	Netflix	Medal of Honor	Docs & Special Interests	2,741	7.92%
2	Apple TV+	Central Park	Comedy Series	3,134	5.20%
3	Netflix	Dolly Parton's Heartstrings	Drama Series	2,958	5.00%
4	Apple TV+	Truth Be Told	Drama Series	3,866	4.35%
5	Netflix	Outer Banks	Drama Series	3,766	3.29%

NHL Hockey

Rank	Network	Program	Genre	TV Uniques	Affinity Share
1	Hulu	Letterkenny	Comedy Series	8,545	29.82%
2	Amazon Prime Video	Tom Clancy's Jack Ryan	Drama Series	4,785	29.55%
3	Netflix	Medal of Honor	Docs & Special Interests	2,741	29.41%
4	Netflix	The English Game	Drama Series	5,896	25.95%
5	Netflix	Arrested Development	Comedy Series	19,655	25.52%

MLB Baseball

Rank	Network	Program	Genre	TV Uniques	Affinity Share
1	Netflix	Last Chance U	Docs & Special Interests	10,258	27.14%
2	Netflix	Tom Clancy's Jack Ryan	Drama Series	4,785	21.36%
3	Amazon Prime Video	Medal of Honor	Docs & Special Interests	2,741	21.34%
4	Netflix	Narcos: Mexico	Drama Series	11,319	20.43%
5	Netflix	Sunderland 'Til I die	Docs & Special Interests	7,318	17.82%

MLS Soccer

Rank	Network	Program	Genre	TV Uniques	Affinity Share
1	Netflix	Sunderland 'Til I die	Docs & Special Interests	7,318	27.10%
2	Netflix	The English Game	Drama Series	5,896	25.64%
3	Netflix	Narcos: Mexico	Drama Series	11,319	5.04%
4	Netflix	GLOW	Comedy Series	6,438	4.38%
5	Apple TV+	See	Drama Series	6,126	4.16%

Source: Nielsen Social Content Ratings. Base sports Tweets from 12/1/19-3/12/20. Series and streaming service Tweeters from 3/13/20-4/15/20.

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In these unprecedented times, social TV affinity data can shed light for sports advertisers and networks looking to understand the repercussions of recent cancelations on tight-knit sports communities. They can identify their super fans, keep track of these valuable groups, and make sure they're engaging authentically wherever their audiences are tuning in.

METHODOLOGY

The insights in this article were derived from Nielsen Social Content Ratings:1/1/20 – 4/19/20.

Interactions are a measure of total relevant social media activity on Facebook, Instagram Business Accounts, and Twitter. Social activity is measured from three hours before through three hours after broadcast, local time. Owned engagements for Facebook include comments, shares, and likes. Owned engagements for Instagram business accounts include comments and likes. Owned engagements for Twitter include retweets, quotes, replies, and likes.

*Per Instagram policy and data availability, only accounts designated as "business accounts" are measurable. As a result, this contributes to a depressed share of individual accounts on Instagram.