COMMUNITY BRIEFS

BEING SEEN ON SCREEN: DIVERSE REPRESENTATION AND INCLUSION ON TV

Access the full brief here: Being Seen on Screen Diverse Representation and Inclusion on TV

Source: Nielsen, Being Seen on Screen: Diverse Representation and Inclusion on TV, 2 December 2020

CONTEXT

As Being Seen on Screen shares, the United States is experiencing demographic transition. 41% of the U.S. population is now racially and ethnically diverse, and people are exploring and defining their personal identities. As the U.S. population diversifies, content providers now also have a unique opportunity to meet our expanding entertainment preferences. The media industry has made some progress in creating a more inclusive ecosystem. Among the top 300 most viewed TV programs in 2019 (including broadcast, cable, and streaming), 92% of all programs measured have some presence of diversity (women, people of color, or LGBTQ) in their recurring casts. But as the data in this report shows, presence is not the same as representation.

GETTING STARTED

The purpose of this exercise is to help you gain exposure to and familiarity with real data, while also exploring diverse representation and inclusion on television. Sometimes getting started with data is the hardest part. Use the helpful hints and reflection questions below to support you in unpacking the data and thinking about some potential next steps.

HELPFUL HINTS

Let the thoughts flow.

Data is all about gathering *lots* of diverse information, so don't be afraid to explore, gather, and share.

Start with open-ended questions.

Don't worry too much about structure, just let the "big picture" gradually reveal itself to you through concrete real-world insights.

Let the data do the talking.

Dig deeper into the data and let the information you find help you build and communicate your ideas.

Explore the data.

Start by reviewing the data presented below, then spend some time considering the reflection questions.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What are some things you noticed when looking at the data?
- Did you notice any trends between the data sets?
- Did you see something that surprised you?
- How does this data help you understand more about representation and inclusion on TV?
- Is there any action that you'd like to take, based on what you've learned from this data?

Source: Nielsen, Being Seen on Screen: Diverse Representation and Inclusion on TV, 2 December 2020

REPRESENTATION IN TELEVISION TODAY
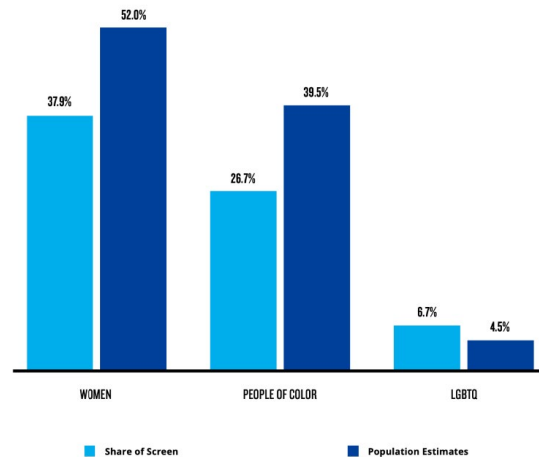
Share of Screen Total TV

Across the TV Landscape, share of screen varies by identity group and by platform. However there are some groups that are represented well across platforms. Broadly speaking, people of color are underrepresented across all of TV. White non-Hispanic people, men and women have the largest share of screen, and People of Color consistently have the lowest.

While there have been more roles for women on TV that break traditional stereotypes, overall, women are still underrepresented. Overall, LGBTQ talent are represented above parity.

WOMEN MAKE UP 52% OF OUR POPULATION YET THEY ONLY HAVE A 38% SHARE OF SCREEN.

SHARE OF SCREEN: TOTAL TV

Bar chart values:
- WOMEN: Share of Screen 37.9%, Population Estimates 52.0%
- PEOPLE OF COLOR: Share of Screen 26.7%, Population Estimates 39.5%
- LGBTQ: Share of Screen 6.7%, Population Estimates 4.5%

Legend: Share of Screen | Population Estimates

Share of Screen by Platform

While TV content today looks and feels more diverse than ever, there are still many opportunities for media to better reflect the society we live in. The chart below represents the share of screen by identity group. Across all platforms, the highest visibility groups are White non-Hispanics followed by Men. As you move down the chart, representation and frequency of visibility is low for many identity groups.

On these platforms, Asian and Black talent have good share of screen. On cable, we see a strong representation of LGBTQ talent; however, when we dive deeper and intersect race/ethnicity with gender, the cable industry has the greatest opportunity to increase parity in on-screen portrayals of many diverse populations.

Nearly one-third of the content on cable doesn't have parity representation of people of color, Women or LGBTQ talent. Subscription video on demand (SVOD) programming represents several identity groups well, helping us understand why more diverse audiences are subscribing to streaming services than the general population.

STREAMING AND BROADCAST ARE AMONG THE MOST INCLUSIVE SOURCES FOR REPRESENTATION OF PEOPLE OF COLOR.

SHARE OF SCREEN BY PLATFORM

Broadcast	Cable	SVOD	Total
66.9%	88.7%	64.7%	81.2%
64.2%	62.2%	51.1%	62.1%
33.1%	37.8%	48.9%	38.0%
24.7%	7.5%	18.9%	18.1%
9.1%	7.0%	10.1%	6.7%
5.1%	3.0%	8.3%	5.5%
5.0%	1.6%	3.3%	4.9%
2.5%	1.0%	2.1%	2.2%
1.7%	0.3%	1.9%	1.7%
0.3%	0.1%	0.8%	0.4%

REPRESENTATION

Legend:
- Male
- Female
- White*
- Black
- LGBTQ
- Hispanic/Latinx
- South/Southeast Asian
- East Asian
- MENA
- Native American

* White = White non-Hispanic or White non-multiracial

DATA HANDOUT

What People See When They See Themselves on TV

How does the context in which representation is present (themes and narratives) shape the way we think about ourselves, other races, ethnic and identity groups? When an identity group in the audience sees their identity group represented at parity or above in programming, what do they see? We evaluated top keyword descriptors* associated with programming where both representation (IOI) and audience (IAI) viewing of the same identity group were high. When an identity group in the audience sees their identity group represented at parity or above in programming, these are the themes they see.
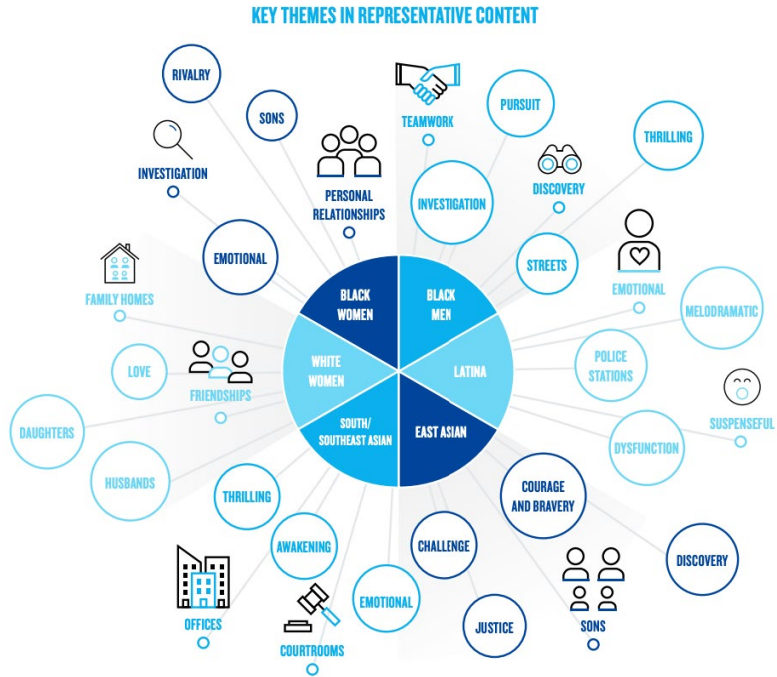
* Gracenote Video Descriptors provide a granular classification of content on ultraprecise keywords capturing the story and context across mood, theme, scenario and more.

KEY THEMES IN REPRESENTATIVE CONTENT