



## All You Can See TV



### Tube-Tied – New Six-Hour-A-Day TV Junkies: Thanks, Tivo!; All You Can See TV

Reprinted from the New York Post  
February 24, 2005

#### For more information:

##### New York City

433 West 14<sup>th</sup> St.  
Suite 3R  
New York, NY 10014  
Phone 212-448-0333  
Fax 212-448-9575  
info@i33.com

##### Detroit

The Fisher Building  
3011 Grand Blvd., Suite 2200  
Detroit, MI 48202  
Phone 313-873-5631  
Fax 313-873-5852  
info@i33.com

##### Washington DC Metro

Sales Office:  
Columbia Corporate Park 100  
6011 University Blvd, Ste. 210  
Ellicott City, MD 21043  
Phone 410-461-5461  
Fax 760-284-9983  
info@i33.com

##### Southern California

Sales Office:  
27672 Paseo Barona  
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675  
Phone 949-218-5694  
Fax 949-481-5146  
info@i33.com



i33 communications

FOR Manhattan executive David Levin, the digital video recorder is a cruel mistress. "I have to watch the reality event shows when I get home, the night they aired, because the morning shows will spoil it if I haven't," he says wearily. "And if you get addicted to a show like 'The West Wing,' then marathons can kill you. All of a sudden, the DVR has seven or eight episodes for you to watch. "Sometimes," he confesses, "I feel like I have to carve out a night - or a weekend - to clear my list before my DVR erases it."

## NEW YORK POST

Sound crazy? He's not alone. Marathon TV-watching has become a hot activity in New York, thanks to the so-called technological advances of the DVR. People who thought the device would give them more free time are struggling to watch every show on their lists - so they can delete them and start piling up new ones.

"The list is like a set of tasks I have to complete, or I feel like a failure," says Levin, who's president of the interactive marketing agency i33 communications. "I spend all day making lists, just to go home to another list!" It all started out so innocently. When the first DVR incarnation, TiVo, came out in 1999, people were thrilled to be able to schedule show recordings, pause live television and whisk through ads. "Do More. Miss Nothing," its slogan promised.

Then in 2003, cable services started offering an affordable, scaled-down version, making it appealing to people who'd never consider shelling out for a TiVo. (See sidebar.) "My ears perked up when I heard it was only a few bucks," says magazine editor Nina Hammerling Smith. "I hate sitting through commercials, so the idea of being able to fast-forward through them was extremely appealing."

Not too long afterward, she says guiltily, "when I wasn't working full-time, I was watching something like six hours of TV a day?" Many viewers say that once you choose to record just a few of your favorite shows, you feel obligated to watch every single episode. You certainly can't use the old excuse of having been out, living your life. "What most people who have these digital recorders don't realize is, before they owned one they could just survive missing a show, and catch up the next week," says Christine Rosen, a fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington and an expert on the burgeoning DVR epidemic.

"Now, you don't have to miss anything. And what we end up doing," she says, "is watching a lot more TV." A study published by Forrester Research last September found that DVR owners are watching six hours a week more than regular TV viewers. And they have no intention of changing their ways.

DVR has more passionate fans than ever - including high-profile owners such as shock jock Howard Stern, who regularly discusses his TiVo dependency.

"We could never give it up," says Steve Morgan, chief technology officer at Oxygen Media, whose multi-TiVo-owning family watches five hours of TV on an average weeknight, and up to 10 hours on a weekend.

Morgan admits he probably watches more shows since he got the recorder, but insists it's more "efficient" viewing. "I skip commercials, promos, openings and closings, etc.," he says. "We almost never watch anything live." Certainly, no one loves increased efficiency as much as overachieving New Yorkers. But they may have met their match in DVRs, which are racking up so many "must-see" shows that they have no time for anything else. Formerly fun-loving urbanites are holed up at home for hours that used to be spent seeing friends, working out and even sleeping.

They're strung out on what one former TiVo user, cited by Rosen, has dubbed "silicon crack." "I feel like I can easily slip into less sleep," says Levin. "I wake up early on weekends. I watch shows without even getting out of bed. There's more than enough time to bang out four shows each morning on the weekend."

Tarah Feinberg, a senior contract administrator at HBO, says he and a now-ex-girlfriend spent a string of near-comatose evenings in front of the tube, thanks to DVR. "We used to come home from work, and she'd have her shows programmed, and I'd have mine, so we'd take turns watching each others' shows, and eventually one of us would get tired and go to bed," he

## All You Can See TV

Reprinted from the New York Post, February 24, 2005

says. "It's crazy, because I don't watch much TV normally." Sound like addict behavior? It is, says Rosen.

"Unlike exercise, or reading great literature, television has a much more dramatic effect on the brain, making us happy and passive," she says. "It has an almost narcotic effect." It has other odd effects; one DVR owner was ashamed to watch real episodes of shows he wanted to see because he missed earlier shows. "What ends up happening is, I start recording things and then I don't have time to watch them," says Dave Feldman, author of the trivia book "Do Elephants Jump?" "And then next week rolls around, and I haven't watched episode one, and now I have episode two. So I end up downloading it to videotapes.

"I have the whole season of 'Desperate Housewives' and 'Lost,' and I've never seen one episode!"

Yet, in spite of all the warning signs and cautionary tales, DVR sales show no signs of slowing - in fact, says Harriet Novet, vice president of public affairs at Time Warner Cable, "They're flying out the door! New Yorkers are snapping them up." Erica Barmash, a magazine assistant who loves "The O.C.," "Everwood" and "Carnivale," just got herself a TiVo last week, and she couldn't be prouder. "Only a few of my friends have it," she says. "They've told me it will change my life."

---

*By Sara Stewart*

