

Time to Diversify the Picture

There has been a lot of debate in recent years about the lack of multicultural programming on both cable and broadcast TV. And the upcoming broadcast season isn't likely to quell the critics' fervor.

While the Big Four are offering several shows starring actors of color as best buddies of white lead characters, no new shows featuring predominately multicultural casts are on the docket for the 2012-13 season.

Cable fares a bit better, with new shows like TV One's comedy series *The Ricky Smiley Show*, BET's Gabrielle Union-starrer *Being Mary Jane* and TBS's Asian-themed comedy *Sullivan & Son* featuring actors of color in lead roles and culturally diverse casts.

But critics have said that TV overall needs to do more to ensure on-screen images adequately reflect the diversity of its viewers.

Crucially, viewers are disenchanted with the state of diverse content on TV.

According to the Horowitz Associates *State of Cable and Digital Media 2012 Multicultural Edition* survey, Asians are among the least satisfied with multicultural representa-

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tion, with 31% surveyed registering an unfavorable rating for quantity and 27% for quality, compared to favorable ratings of 24% and 22%, respectively.

Among African-Americans, only 36% felt television was delivering quality multicultural content. That number is even lower for English-speaking Hispanics: Just 29% registered a favorable rating for quality, according to Horowitz.

The most satisfied group was Spanish-dominant Hispanics. More than half of them were positive about the amount of multicultural programming on television, while 46% were satisfied with content quality. Spanish-language TV comprises 69% of Spanish-speaking Hispanics' viewing, Horowitz found.

Bottom line: Multicultural viewers — who already over-index in cable subscriptions, relative to the population — would most likely find even more value in their service, if more content were available that realistically represented their cultures.

In a very competitive home-entertainment environment, that's a business argument that can't be ignored. **Q**

Balancing Privacy and Security

The big technology debate on Capitol Hill 20 years ago was about encryption software — software that changes plain text into unreadable script to anyone who does not have a "key" — pitting "security" against a citizen's privacy.

Many in government predicted great calamity if the use of robust encryption was allowed to continue without the federal government having a built-in means to overcome the encryption at will, to sneak in when it wanted. In the end, citizens won, and no calamity resulted.

Now, one of the big debates this year is over cybersecurity legislation — legislation attempting to find a way to protect U.S. "critical infrastructure" from domestic or foreign cyber-attacks — and again government officials are determined to attack the problem by attacking privacy and replacing it with greater government control.

The debate boils down to an old question — citizens' rights versus security, or more exactly, how many of our constitutionally guaranteed rights protecting us from government would be eroded to grow government to a size to try to add some additional security?

To be fair, there is a challenge — more than 80% of critical infrastructure is owned by the private sector, including such things as the chemical plants and financial networks. How to provide adequate protection, then, from attack?

Current considerations have included so-called voluntary standards developed by the federal government. But those are

ACCESS



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a small step away from being mandatory requirements, in other words, more regulation.

An appropriate solution would encourage good behavior by the private sector, including guarantees that citizens are protected from "Internet eavesdropping" and other privacy-destroying schemes that avoid legal oversight. An adequate solution would also include clear definitions of the threats and what efforts can be made to defeat those threats, and more essentially, a clear, thoughtful definition of "critical infrastructure."

Fundamentally, a strong partnership with the private sector should be the goal, rather than an overly regulatory new construct of bureaucracies and mandates, bogging down innovation and the ability to act and react, all guaranteed to further erode our guaranteed liberties and still leave our security suspect.

The "special interests" fighting in this case are U.S. citizens versus expanding government, liberty versus control. So when the White House expresses frustration in a statement, "The politics of obstructionism, driven by special interest groups seeking to avoid accountability, prevented Congress from passing legislation to better protect our nation from potentially catastrophic cyberattacks," then the very special interest of liberty must be winning. **Q**

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