

CW Offers 'Husbands,' More Web Fare from Digital Studio (Exclusive)

55 cited in Minority Television Project, Inc. v. F.C.C. No. 11-55016 archived on December 11, 2013

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MARCH 27, 2013 | 10:33AM PT

Net also hopes to migrate social media fans over from once-hit shows to budding new series

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Less than a year ago, the [CW](#) launched the in-house CW [Digital Studio](#), emphasizing the net's focus on younger, online auds and [Web](#) content.

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After rolling out short-form comedy "Stupid Hype" and micro celeb newsmag "CelebTV," CW is moving forward with a broad development slate that includes "Reno-911"-meets-"X-Files" comedy "P.E.T. Squad," and migrating popular [Web series](#) "[Husbands](#)" over to [the CW](#) digital platforms.

"'Husbands' has been a critically-acclaimed, user-friendly YouTube series for two seasons," said [Rick Haskins](#), exec veep of marketing and digital programs at CW. "By bringing that to the CW, we hope to bring new fans over to the network and to CW broadcast shows as well."

A borrowed equity strategy like the one employed with "Husbands" is the name of Haskins' game at the network. The CW understands that when building an online following, it must tap into pre-existing fan

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bases in order to transition viewers over to the digital platforms.



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"Stupid Hype," the CW's first show to be launched through CWD, cast "[Hart of Dixie](#)" star Wilson Bethel for the shorts, hoping to draw fans from his broadcast series over to CWTV.com. The net also offered on-air ad spots promoting "Stupid Hype" and "CelebTV," encouraging viewers to hit the Web for digital content.

Previously announced digital shows including cartoon series "Gallery Mallory" are also hoping to capitalize on CW broadcast programs' rabid, young fan base, casting Misha Collins ("Supernatural"), Justin Hartley ("Smallville") and Kat Graham ("The Vampire Diaries") in the shorts.

"What's great about these actors is that they're highly social, and we'll be able to post, say, that 'Gallery Mallory' episode on our 'Vampire Diaries' Facebook page and have Kat tweet it out," Haskins explains. "People can then watch their favorite stars appear in a new series."

For now, CW is pleading the fifth when it comes to digital metrics, taking a Netflix-like approach to what data is released. While the net says that around 20% of its broadcast show viewership is accounted for with digital auds, CW has no plans to release raw viewer numbers from its digital platforms anytime soon.

In the social media space, CW is working to move its bank of Facebook fans on now-defunct shows over to newer skeins. "Gossip Girl," for example, ended its run on the net last year, but still has over 13 million Facebook likes, and tens of thousands of active

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FILM 9:08AM PT

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participants on the page — a serious commodity in the social media space.

“We’re working right now with Facebook on a prototype,” Haskins says. “We were some of the first people that came to Facebook and posed this problem. We’re in a beta test to see how we can migrate, say, ‘Smallville’ Facebook fans to ‘Arrow’s’ page, ‘Gossip Girl’ to ‘Carrie Diaries’ and some ‘Smallville’ fans to ‘Beauty and the Beast.’”

Also on CW’s digital radar is a retooling of CWTV.com, after the launch of Web series last year proved to be confusing on the site’s layout. Net will be creating a specific vertical to silo all digital content and offer greater ease of navigation for viewers.

And don’t count on viewers as being the sole migratory party in the CW digital mix; Haskins sees broadcast potential for numerous CW digital properties.

“That’s one of the reasons why we’re doing this: to use it as an incubator,” Haskins notes. “I can’t pick from all of my children, but I can say some are better looking than others. We have three strong potentials of moving over to broadcast. And, even if they don’t, I’m finding new talent and storytelling that may translate to a writer coming up with a new series.”

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March 29, 2013 at 1:19

Marguerite (@margcellent) says:

This is WONDERFUL news, indeed! Thank you for reporting on CW's decision to migrate "Husbands" to it's digital platform. I for one will be a devout "Husbands" fan brought over to CW precisely because it recognized the excellence of this series. With top-notch writing, acting and production, this series will bring it's current fans to CW while gaining a broader audience from CW viewers. Husbands and CW: a marriage made in digital heaven.

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