

Bulletin

This edition contains analysis of the seasonality of TV viewing, announcements about HD reporting and investigating the capture of TV viewing via PCs and an update on the implementation programme for the BARB contract post 2009.

- ▶ Seasonality of TV Viewing
- ▶ Reporting HDTV
- ▶ R&D – Capturing TV Viewing via PCs
- ▶ BARB Contract 2010 –
Implementation Programme Update

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Seasonality of TV Viewing

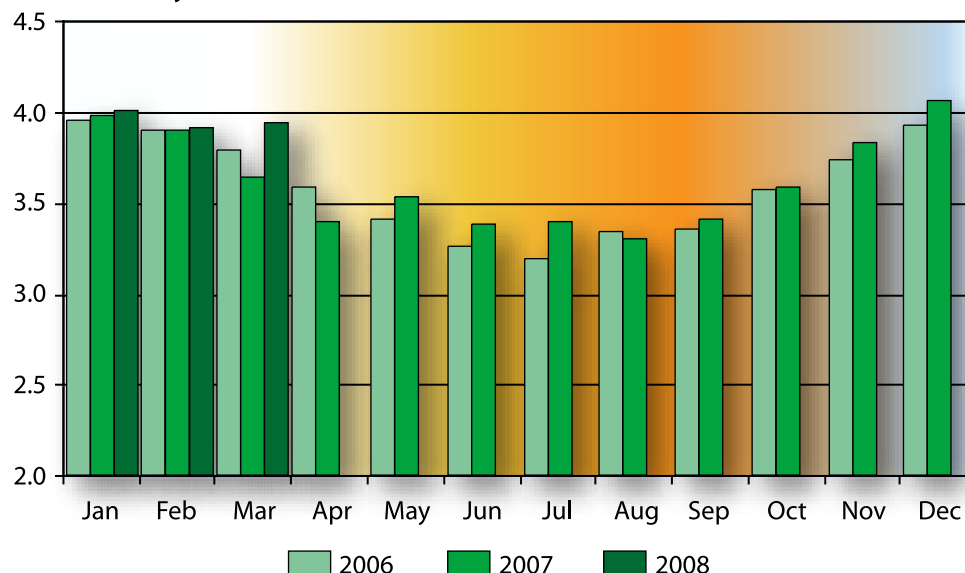
Television viewing varies seasonally across the year. The highest levels of viewing tend to be seen in the winter months; viewing usually then falls during the spring and reaches its lowest level in the summer before climbing again throughout autumn and returning to its winter peak.

The first chart, which plots average daily viewing for Individuals 4+ by calendar month, shows this pattern for 2006 and 2007. Within this seasonal pattern there are other factors that may affect viewing levels, the weather for example. Unsurprisingly viewing tends to rise if the weather is poor and fall if the weather is fine.

It is evident from this chart that in 2008 viewing levels in March were similar to those seen in January and February. This contrasts with the seasonal pattern in previous years, where viewing in March tends to be noticeably lower than January and February. Weather may be at least partly responsible for this; March 2008 was reported to be the wettest March in recent years. Another factor in 2008 may be the relatively early date for Easter - Good Friday fell on 21 March. Viewing levels were particularly high over this weekend; again, wintry weather may have contributed.

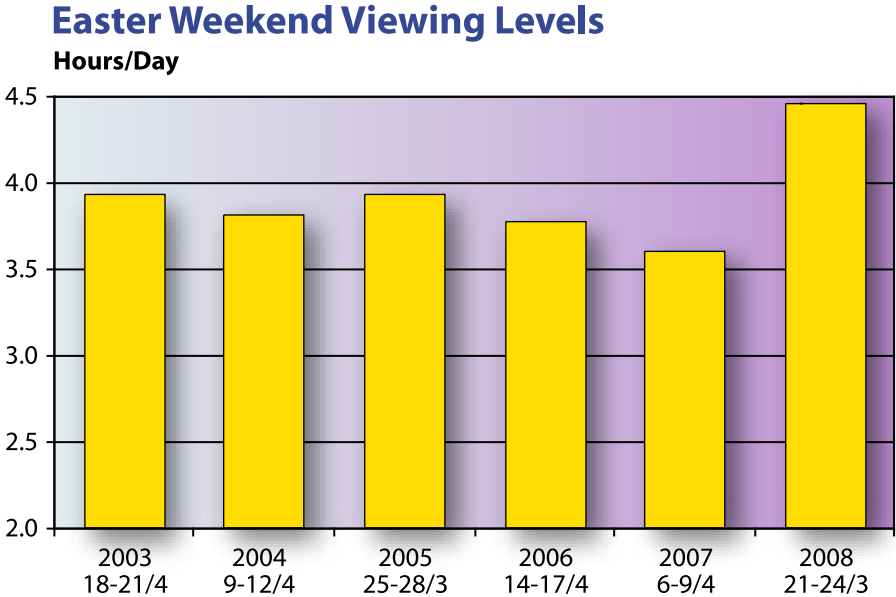
Average Daily Viewing, Individuals 4+

Hours/Day



The second chart plots average viewing levels seen over every Easter weekend since 2003. Easter 2008 viewing levels were 13% higher than the next highest viewing Easter weekends in 2003 and 2005.

Non-regular broadcast events may also influence viewing levels over and above the normal seasonal pattern. Two possible examples this year are the Euro 2008 football tournament and the Olympics.



It is possible that UK interest in Euro 2008 will be lower than for other recent European championships owing to the lack of home nation involvement. Even so, matches that do not involve home nations are still able to attract large audiences. The table shows the ten highest match audiences during Euro 2004, excluding the England matches. Not surprisingly, the more important matches in the later stages of the tournament attracted some of the highest audiences. The final, between Portugal and Greece, was the highest rating single broadcast with 10.8 million viewers and attracted an aggregate average audience of over 14 million across the two channels on which it was shown simultaneously. (Interestingly these two teams also contested the tournament's opening game, which was watched by 6.2 million viewers). Seven other matches attracted audiences of over 7 million individuals.

Top Ten Euro 2004 match audiences excluding England matches

		Million Individuals
1	Portugal v Greece (Final)	10.8
2	Spain v Portugal	8.8
3	Germany v Czech Republic	8.3
4	Portugal v Netherlands (Semi Final)	8.2
5	Czech Republic v Greece (Semi Final)	8.2
6	Germany v Netherlands	8.0
7	Croatia v France	7.6
8	Sweden v Netherlands (Quarter Final)	7.0
9	Netherlands v Czech Republic	6.7
10	Czech Republic v Denmark (Quarter Final)	6.7





Reporting of High Definition TV Services

From 31 March 2008 a new reporting option is available for channels broadcasting in HD.

Whilst some HD channels are simulcast entirely with a Standard Definition (SD) “parent” channel, others show unique content as a stand alone channel and others still transmit a combination of unique and simulcast content.

A new reporting option allows any viewing on an HD channel to programmes that are simulcast with a reported SD channel to be added together. This allows for the reporting of one single consolidated channel figure for simulcast content.

Prior to 31 March this option had only been available to HD channels where the output is 100% simulcast with the SD channel. An example of this is viewing to Sky Arts HD included in data for standard definition Sky Arts. The new facility means that this option is now available to those HD channels where only part of the output is simulcast on an SD channel.

Broadcasters still have the option to have HD channels reported separately as stand alone channels, in which case viewing to the simulcast content is not included in the viewing to the SD channel.



► Capturing TV Viewing via PCs

As mentioned in the February Bulletin, we plan to trial potential solutions for monitoring TV viewing via PCs, with fixed and software metering.

As well as technical issues, which can be laboratory tested, there are issues of public acceptability and compliance to consider. We plan to assess the willingness for participation on a combined TV and PC viewing panel and how acceptable it is to households to have the TV viewing they do on their PCs captured along with that viewed on their television sets.



► BARB contract 2010

Since the award of contract on 17 December 2007 the set-up process has commenced and is on schedule.

Work on methodological design and data file structures has been under way from the back end of last year. Discussions are taking place regarding the format of the data files from which audience data is provided to BARB subscribers. Panel member recruitment commenced on 31 March to begin building the new panel in the second half of this year. The functionality of the system is planned to be tested from the beginning of 2009 and the new panel installed and operating in parallel with the current reporting panel from the second quarter of next year, before going live on 1st January 2010.

BARB

We always encourage feedback, so do tell us what you think
BARB, 18 Dering Street, London W1S 1AQ
Telephone: 020 7529 5529 Fax: 020 7529 5530 www.barb.co.uk