## Watching television

### Cracking the screens

# Media bosses hope mobile devices will help, rather than hurt, television



**(Stormy beginning) IN THE television business, as at buffets, people crave seconds.** A series is deemed a success if it is renewed for another season. The industry is currently obsessed with the “second screen”—mobile phones and tablets that people play with while they watch TV. Whilst around three-quarters of internet users regularly fiddle with a mobile device while watching the TV, media executives are abuzz believing that they could turn this distraction into profitable transactions. ( Thesis)

For one, Twitter, as a modern social-media firm, has big ambitions for little screens .It trumpets its role as a complement to TV, pointing out that fans sent 24 million tweets during this year’s Super Bowl and that 45% of the TV ads during the event invited viewers to tweet about them. The firm has launched Twitter Amplify, a service that lets media firms and others tweet clips of shows or sporting events. These carry sponsorship messages from advertisers and make money for both the TV company and Twitter.

On the other hand, Old-fashioned TV companies see the opportunity too, and insist the second screen will not hurt their first, and primary, source of advertising revenue. Viewers who are multitasking with other devices tend to tune in for longer, because they are commenting on the shows online or interacting with extra content through the networks’ apps. **A survey** by Bravo, an American network owned by Comcast, found that viewers using mobile phones were also more likely to sit through adverts. TV executives predict it will become more common to sync TV and mobile ads, so marketing messages are reinforced across the two screens.

But with more screens, advertising may become confusing. Firms will start to advertise on mobiles while viewers watch a TV ad for a rival product, predicts Charles Muirhead of Rightster, an online-video platform. And media firms must be careful not to besiege viewers with too many ads and novel features. “There’s a fine line between providing consumers with information they want and annoying them,” says Alan Wurtzel, president of research at NBCUniversal, a media firm.

After all, the second screen is unlikely to be as lucrative as many hope because its impact will be limited to certain shows. Second-screen applications work best when people watch live TV. But more people are watching shows on demand. No one is sure whether the money spent on advertising **will** grow thanks to the second screen, or simply come out of marketers’ overall TV budgets.

Comment: concluding paragraph shows a perspective of future