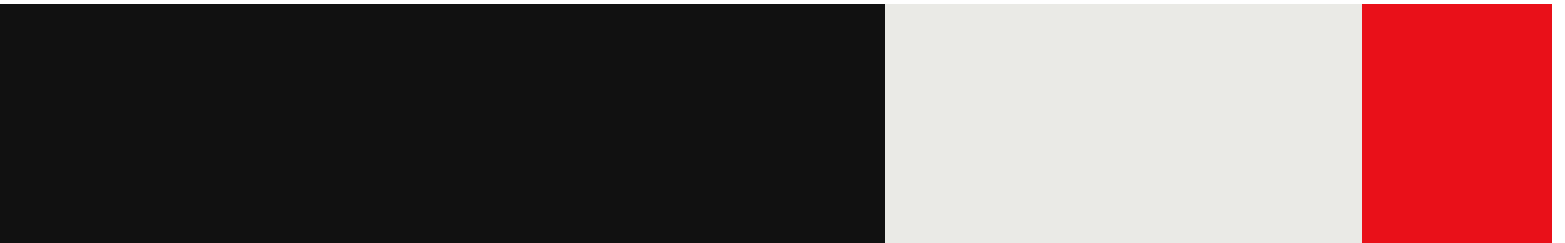Carina Perkins, Suzy Davidkhanian, and Sarah Marzano

The Weekly Listen: The Paris Olympics' ads and viewership habits, X sues advertisers, and more

Audio

On today's podcast episode, we discuss the interesting ways folks watch the Olympics, the best (and not so best) ads from the Games, the impact of X suing advertisers, how much in-

store chatbots can move the needle, how to view Disney's streaming profitability milestone, which national park most of America could drive to in a day, and more. Tune in to the discussion with our vice president of content Suzy Davidkhanian and analysts Sara Marzano and Carina Perkins.

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Episode Transcript:

Marcus Johnson:

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Hello everyone and thanks for hanging out with us for the Behind the Numbers Weekly Listen, an EMARKETER podcast. This is the Friday show whose guests just asked if they could do the show without me.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Hi. Guests was a big word there.

Marcus Johnson:

Guests?

Sarah Marzano :

Just me.

Suzy Davidkhanian :

Yeah, it's just one.

Marcus Johnson :

And then you all agreed.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Though I fully support. Yeah.

Marcus Johnson:

Okay.

Sarah Marzano :

We will do it without you.

Marcus Johnson):

Terrific.

Suzy Davidkhanian :

We do it without you on Wednesdays.

Marcus Johnson :

That's with another ho... Okay.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

I'm just saying.

Marcus Johnson:

I'm like a big hug. I'm your host for just one more week. Marcus Johnson in today's show. How the Paris Olympics went and what ads were the most interesting? X sues a group of advertisers. How impactful can in-store chatbots be? How should we view Disney's streaming profitability milestone? And some facts about American National Parks. Join me for this episode. We have three people, let's meet and then we start with our vice president of contents. Heads up our Retail & Ecommerce desk based in New York City, it's Suzy Davidkhanian.

Suzy Davidkhanian :

Hello. Thanks for having me.

Marcus Johnson:

Hello there. Someone else who also lives in the City, our principal analyst who covers everything retail media, it's Sarah Marzano.

Sarah Marzano:

You remembered where I live. Thanks for having me.

Marcus Johnson:

I did. Did I not used to remember?

Sarah Marzano:

Mm-hmm. Correct.

Marcus Johnson:

I did misspell your name yesterday though, so [inaudible 00:01:49].

Sarah Marzano:

Yes. And I still said yes to being here.

Marcus Johnson:

That's true. You had no choice. We have our senior analyst who covers everything UK and Western Europe. It is, of course, Carina Perkins.

Carina Perkins:

Hi Marcus.

Marcus Johnson:

Hello.

Super awkward. We start with the story of the week-

Suzy Davidkhanian :

I will never forget the pizza pun.

Marcus Johnson:

... we play a game and we end with trivia. Let's get to it. We start with the story of the week.

How did the Paris Olympics go? Well, the Paris Olympic Games have just finished. The Paralympics are coming up. And there were tens of millions of viewers that were tuned in every day to the Olympics, starting with the Opening Ceremony. NBCUniversal posted a 14-day total audience delivery average of 32 million viewers. In addition to solid viewership, NBCUniversal announced its delivering the highest Olympic and Paralympic ad revenue in history featuring more advertisers than the Rio and Tokyo Olympics combined. Obviously, one

of those was during the pandemic, so it was a weird time, with half a billion dollars coming from first-time sponsors. Saleah Blancaflor of Adweek notes that NBCU had said it was on track to break the Tokyo record in terms of ad dollars of $1.25 billion.

So the numbers look good in terms of the dollars. They also look pretty decent in terms of the viewership. Before we talk about the ads, there was an interesting study I've got here from ThinkNow. Because I think everyone's Olympic viewership looks different. And this was showing that 31% of people say that during the two-week-long Summer Olympics they watch every day. So 31% of people said they watch every day. Most people, 44% watch most days, so not every day, but now and again throughout the week. 20%, just when their preferred sporting event is on. And 5% only if and when they have time. Suzy, what are your thoughts on Olympic viewership?

Suzy Davidkhanian:

So I think... It's interesting to note that it is so high again, which is kind of nice, right? It's an event... We've talked about these types of events that bring everybody together. This one's a global one. So we have the Emmys and the Oscars that bring the US together, and maybe global but in a slightly different way because a lot of the different countries have their own award ceremonies. This one is really truly around sportsmanship, people helping each other. I don't know if you guys heard about this story where one of the athletes didn't have a bicycle and Germany passed them a bicycle. There's so many fun stories. So once you start to hear these stories and a little bit of controversy, once you start to hear the stories, I think people start to watch even more to see what they're missing. It's always a challenge I find when there's a big time gap because you already know sometimes the results before you get to watch the sport.

Marcus Johnson:

Something else that was interesting with viewership this year, you mentioned athletes, specifically. More and more folks that seem to be following specific athletes, which is what we've seen in sports in general. A lot of younger folks may not have a specific affiliation to a team, but they're a lot more inclined than they used to be to follow a specific athlete. That seems to be happening here as well. CivicScience research showing that at Rio's 2016 Olympics, 17% of people who follow specific athletes, that grew to 25% this Olympics in Paris. The share of people following specific events fell from 83 to 75. So it makes things like featuring specific athletes or influences more and more valuable with these Olympics versus

previous ones. Carina, what did you make of the Olympics in general? What stood out to you about this year?

Carina Perkins:

Well, I think what was really interesting this year again was the difference that we had in the last Olympics, it was the Tokyo event. Obviously, there was kind of very limited audience out there in Tokyo because it was in the middle of the pandemic. And so I really thought this year there was a lot more atmosphere to a lot of the sport. And everyone, you sort of heard the athletes out there talking about how good the atmosphere was. And I really think a lot more people engaged in the Olympics. And I think that has been reflected in viewership. So I found something that said BBC Sport's coverage of the 2024 Paris Olympics was streamed online 208 million times. And that's double the number of streams recorded during the Tokyo games three years ago. So I think it really just did have a bit more of a sense of occasion. I feel bad for Tokyo, Japan, it wasn't really their fault, it was just the circumstance. But I think as well, it's interesting in the UK we've really... I felt like the Olympics just keep gaining momentum apart from that strange pandemic year. And it's been since we hosted it here, so since the 2012 games, I think a lot more people tuned in then because it was Olympics happening in the UK and people got really interested in it, the UK did quite well. And since then I feel like there's been quite a lot of interest. People are really, like you said, kind of following UK athletes and tuning in. So I think it's lovely to see how the momentum is building with it really.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah. Let's turn our attention to the ads because it is such a huge event, these don't come around very often. The World Cup isn't anything that's really that comparable in terms of scale. Sarah, I'll start with you. What did you make of the ads that you were seeing at the Olympics? And did one stand out for any particular reason?

Sarah Marzano:

So one ad that really stood out to me was Nike's new campaign.

Marcus Johnson:

Yep.

Sarah Marzano:

Winning Isn't For Everyone.

Marcus Johnson:

Mm-hmm.

Sarah Marzano:

So for anyone that hasn't seen it, the ad is narrated by Willem Dafoe, and it takes on this kind of dark, challenging tone. And it highlights some of the quote-unquote less nice attributes that the ad argues are associated with great athletes or winners. So things like being really obsessive, really competitive, doing anything to win. And when I started reading more about it, what's interesting is that there's a history here. This is a call back to a Nike campaign from 1996-

Marcus Johnson:

Interesting.

Sarah Marzano:

... which depicted Lisa Leslie with the tagline, You Don't Win Silver, You Lose Gold.

Marcus Johnson:

Wow.

Sarah Marzano:

And that campaign was also narrated by Willem Dafoe-

Marcus Johnson:

No way.

Sarah Marzano:

... and caused some controversy at the time. So I thought that was really interesting and cool. I think that the ad did what you hope an advertisement will do. It got people talking, it cuts through that kind of feel good noise. And I think it does a good job of sort of reminding people why the Olympics are so enthralling. You tune in because of the possibility of witnessing singular greatness, right?

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah.

Sarah Marzano:

These are athletes, these are individual athletes in a lot of the events that are the best at what they do. And I think for Nike, they explicitly said that the Olympics campaign would be the springboard for a new marketing strategy. The brand is looking to kind of regain and find its footing after some lackluster performance. And they've made nods to sort of kind of refocusing on precision athletic gear, and this being part of that. So that's an ad that I found very memorable.

Marcus Johnson:

The Olympics are a good launching point for kind of a rebrand or a new campaign. So I thought that was a really great example. That's what I had written down as the best. The one that a lot of people seem to agree might be the worst was Google's AI fan letter. And so Caroline Mimbs Nyce of The Atlantic wrote, "Google wins gold for the worst Olympic ad."

Sarah Marzano:

Ouch.

Marcus Johnson:

As company suggests using AI to write a child's fan letter. The ad called Dear Sydney shows a little girl who's a runner who loves team USA's Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone, the world record holding track star, and wants to write her a letter. So her dad turns to an AI chatbot to help his daughter out with this. This seemed to get a ton of pushback. Any thoughts on this one?

Suzy Davidkhanian:

I didn't think it was so bad, to be honest with you. I think we think about GenAI as a tool that helps make things a little bit easier and faster. You can't just let it be on its own without some sort of human supervision. And the whole premise of the ad was like, "We'll help you save time so that you can spend more quality one-on-one time with your child." What I thought was a little bit poor for poor Google was that Apple just had the whole backlash around their iPad having all that creative energy and AI will replace you. And so in that way it felt tone-deaf, they should have probably spent a little bit more of the frames on... they had some, but the

dad with the daughter doing the GenAI tool on Google, and a little bit more family time using the tool.

Marcus Johnson:

Interesting. Mm-hmm.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

And then some of the other like tying her shoelaces, watching her practice, whatever she was doing.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah. Megan Morrone of Axios was offering the counter to everyone saying that it was terrible or they missed the mark. She was saying we already use technology to augment parenting. Saying parents have long leaned on calculators, Wikipedia, Google searches, Alexa and Siri for help with parenting and homework tasks. They've been using ChatGPT for help communicating too. Saying in addition, job seekers use ChatGPT to write their resumes and cover letters. And managers regularly use it to write performance reviews. So it is a big part of our lives. There was something about using it to replace sitting down with your little girl to write a letter with her and having that moment and teaching her how to write and having her write a letter that's not perfect and that being perfectly okay. But I think yeah, she does make some good points here. Carina, let's end with you. What ad jumped out to you the most?

Carina Perkins:

So mine is actually a broadcaster ad, it is the BBC ad. I don't know if anyone has seen it, but it's really beautiful. So it's an animated ad and it's kind of a love story to sport and to Paris. And it was created by BBC Creative with Nexus Studios and Fx Goby, who is the studio behind the Gorillaz animations. And it was just a really nice play on Paris's reputation of the city of romance and it kind of used cliches about love as an analogy for the passion and the dedication that athletes have for their sport. So I think at one point the narrator says, "Love makes your heart race." And you see a couple riding through the streets of Paris on a sort of moped and that merges into a competitive cycle race. And it is just a really beautiful, nice advert. And it's narrated by a French actor and it's soundtracked by Edith Piaf. And it's lots of the Paris' famous landmarks like the Eiffel Tower and the Notre-Dame. So if people haven't watched it, I would go and watch it because it's just a really beautiful thing.

Marcus Johnson:

Very nice.

Sarah Marzano:

Yeah, that sounds nice.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah. Anyway, that's all we got time for for the story of the week. Let's move now to our game of the week. Today's game, The Weekly Listen Olympics.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

That's not scored like gymnastics.

Marcus Johnson:

It's just a super-duper game [inaudible 00:13:08]-

Sarah Marzano :

It makes it sound more exciting than it is, really.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah, it's the same game, [inaudible 00:13:11].

Suzy Davidkhanian:

I'm going to do what the US team is doing right now.

Sarah Marzano:

[inaudible 00:13:13] better name than the other game then. Sorry.

Marcus Johnson:

Okay. Thank you. Didn't need that. How does it work? Three rounds, today we have Fortune Teller, Move the Needle and The Random Scale. The better the answers, the more points you get, the more likely you are to get a medal. And it's not coincidence that we have Sarah Marzano representing the USA, Suzy Davidkhanian representing Canada, and Carina Perkins representing Great Britain, as we compete as a collective.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Oh, that's very clever.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah, come on.

Sarah Marzano:

I see what you did here.

Carina Perkins :

If I knew I was competing for my country, I would've been a bit nicer earlier on.

Marcus Johnson :

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

I didn't know why you were like, "This is who I [inaudible 00:13:46]."

Marcus Johnson:

Luckily, you're English, as am I, so that gives you a huge leg up.

Carina Perkins:

Yes.

Marcus Johnson:

All right, round one.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

This sounds like Olympic gymnastics right now, scoring.

Marcus Johnson:

We'll start with Fortune Teller, that's where we predict the future. And we'll start with the USA, Sarah. So X sues a group of advertisers and major companies like Unilever, Mars, CVS Health and trade association, the World Federation of Advertisers, WFA, accusing them of unlawfully

agreeing to boycott the site, writes Daniel Thomas and Michelle Fleury of the BBC. The year after Mr. Musk bought Twitter or X, ad revenue fell by more than half as concerns rose regarding content moderation. X's lawsuit alleges the accused firms withheld ad dollars by following safety standards set out by a WFA initiative called Global Alliance for Responsible Media or GARM. Which has since shut down saying as a nonprofit it doesn't have the resources to operate and fight X in court. At the same time, GARM, who represents major brands responsible for over 90% of global ad spending encouraged advertisers to avoid Twitter after Mr. Musk bought it with 18 GARM members halting advertising on Twitter altogether. According to the suit, with dozens of others reducing their spend by 70% or more. But Sarah, Fortune Teller, what effect will this lawsuit have on X?

Sarah Marzano:

I'm going to pull a Suzy and not really answer your question. But I think... Okay, this is an insane story and as I was reading about it and sort of thinking about how I wanted to approach it, I sort of think that we're asking the wrong question if we focus on what this means for X. I think, to me, the fact that the WFA suspended GARM operations, it sort of says more about the state of brand safety standards and challenges that advertisers are facing. So GARM has really been crucial in acting as a representative body for advertisers, setting standards and then applying the pressure to uphold those standards to platforms. And so the fact that they didn't have the resources or finances to withstand a lawsuit of this scale, look, I think that without GARM, advertisers are still going to have a choice on where they invest, where they spend their dollars. So I don't think the dissolution or the dissolving of GARM is going to be a good thing for X. In fact, I think advertisers are going to be less likely if that was possible to want to go anywhere near X and Elon Musk's platform. But I think it just really highlights this pervasive issue that advertisers are facing around the riskiness in terms of monitoring where your content is appearing and the impact it can have on your brand.

Marcus Johnson:

Advertisers are less likely to work with them. That's what I had down here as well. And I think a new revenue model's coming because it's damn near impossible to see advertisers working with X after this. Kate Conger of The New York Times is writing, "With the lawsuit, X effectively declared war on advertisers." Elon Musk tweeting literally that, "We tried being nice for two years and got nothing but empty words. Now it is war." Carina, what do you think?

Carina Perkins:

Yeah, I agree with that really it's a bit of a strange one. X, according to legal professionals is quite unlikely to be able to prove that there was any collusion between advertisers. And it's not going to be an incentive for companies to advertise with X in the future if it's suing previous advertisers.

Marcus Johnson:

Suzy?

Suzy Davidkhanian:

I think there's a lot to say about this one, but I would start with three things. One, this isn't good for anybody, right? So advertisers have one less place to put their ads, so that means that consumers have less places, if that's your right consumer on X, that means consumers have less places to go to, ads are going to become more expensive. There could be a charge, if now you're only concentrating on X, not X, X, but Y number of platforms minus one, maybe everything will be more expensive, I'm not really sure. So I don't think it does the brands of favor. I don't think you can prove collusion, but I'm not sure that it helped that that body dissolved right after, right? So that feels off. So is it going to help X? What is the effect of X? I think they're losing all around and his combative way doesn't help in any way, shape or form. At the end of the day, brands want to be where their consumers are. And if brands don't feel like their consumer, their target market is on X, they're not going to be there either.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah. You said it feels like they're losing already. My question here was why now? Well, things seem to be getting pretty desperate for the firm. X's revenue is continuing to struggle. In Q2, X or Twitter earned just over $100 million in the US. Which is down 25% from Q1, and down over 50% from last Q2 according to internal documents obtained by The New York Times. And advertisers didn't really need their arm twisted to leave Twitter. It was important for a lot of them, but it was always a small piece of advertisers' media plans. The year before Mr. Musk bought Twitter, it accounted for 1% of US ad spending. Advertisers were spending 28 times as much on Google that year and 23 times as much on Meta. So it wasn't too hard to shut that tap off in terms of the importance for people's ad budgets. All right, folks, let's move to round two, Move the Needle, and we'll start with Carina for this one. This is where folks have to tell me how much this story will move the needle out of 10. In-store chatbots is what we're talking about. Consumers may be beginning to use voice AI assistance for online shopping, but they

would like to keep this tech out of brick and mortar stores according to some Payments Intelligence research. It showed that only 14% of folks wanted in-store voice assistance, put another way, 86% did not. Retailers are already deploying chatbots to help folks online. Carina, you point out in the piece, almost 1/4 of retailers, 22% have already deployed GenAI to automate customer service, online that is, with a further 25% currently trialing it according to an October 2023 survey by Google Cloud and NewtonX. Question is, Move the Needle, how impactful can in-store chatbots be out of 10, Carina?

Carina Perkins:

Okay, I'm going to give it a five. And that's predicated on, I don't think that people want AI chatbots, voice-activated chatbots in-store to replace the kind of human touch. I think when people are shopping in-store, they still really appreciate that human interaction. And I think that's quite different to when they're shopping online. I think even when they're shopping online, sometimes having an AI chatbot instead of a human can be frustrating. So I don't think that they're going to catch on from a consumer's perspective like that. But I think where there is scope to do, and I think some retailers have already started doing this, is using GenAI in tools that in-store staff can then use to get answers quicker. So they're giving in-store staff tablets and giving them access to their own kind of GenAI models that allow them then to help people quicker. And I could see that that actually could catch on and that's quite a clever way of doing it.

Marcus Johnson:

Mm-hmm. Suzy?

Suzy Davidkhanian:

So I think if the question that the survey asked was with that particular example, which is, you say, "I want this." And then the chatbot does everything for you, voice activated. It's like doing an online experience in a store which takes away from the fun of going to the store, browsing, touching, impulse purchasing. So that I think is a zero. But like Carina said, I do think actually there's a 10 potential once you show a consumer... Think back to the QR codes, once you show a consumer the need, the help, the time saving, the efficiencies of different types of tools, not this one in particular, I do think that there will be a lot of adoption. I just think we're a little bit further away from that because right now it's still hard for people to conceptualize how this will help me do my daily tasks better.

Marcus Johnson:

Mm-hmm. And Sarah.

Sarah Marzano:

Yeah. So I have focused on the voice activated piece of this and I think it makes sense for online customers because when it comes to introducing technology to what consumers are doing, you have to identify a piece of friction that you're eliminating. And even though it's a small piece of friction, it's like, "Okay, you can just use your voice instead of typing, right?" Whether that's typing on your phone or into your browser. And I just don't think same friction exists in stores. Side note, that I also thought the way that Payments had phrased their question was sort of bizarre. An AI assistant for in-store shopping that fills a cart and arranges for same day delivery felt a little bit confusing to me because I'm not sure how that would actually look or work. But Suzy, your interpretation around that kind of taking the fun out of in-store shopping I think is very valid. And then I'll just call back to what Carina said. I see more utility when it comes to deploying these tools for in-store staff to make their job easier for in-store mapping or looking up a product. But ultimately, I give this between a three and a four.

Marcus Johnson:

Okay.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

But it could have worked if it was on an app and you're on the app and you're like, "Rufus, tell me where I..." Well, that's a bad example because that's Amazon.

Sarah Marzano:

Are you going to wander around a store talking like that to your phone?

Suzy Davidkhanian:

But you might say like, "Hey, whatever the name of your app is, I want to do X party." And then it'll be like, "Aisle two, pick up this, aisle five." And then as you're walking by, I think there's something so nice about walking through the store where you buy extra things but sometimes you can't find what you're looking for and that just feels very frustrating.

Sarah Marzano:

Yeah, maybe there's a use case for the in-store wayfinding and planning your trip before you go. I just, again... I'm speaking as someone who has recently gotten really into talk to text, but then I leave the house and I don't want to do it because I don't want to look crazy.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

People will think... Yeah.

Sarah Marzano:

I just don't see people running around the store. It feels like the new version of turning on your flashlight at the restaurant to see the menu.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

That's [inaudible 00:23:37].

Sarah Marzano:

It's embarrassing.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Probably I would tweak it with some new version of beacon technology, right? So you have the app on, you enable the notifications, you're walking through the store. And there's something, you walk by it, and the app is like, "Oh no, wait, we think you'd love this." And it pings you and it's like, "Wait, look to your right, there's something here."

Marcus Johnson:

Interesting.

Sarah Marzano:

I was just going to say some of the dynamic price tags come with the LED lights that can help you find where something is in a store.

Marcus Johnson:

Right.

Sarah Marzano:

And I think that's being deployed at a lot of grocery stores and big box retailers, but you could see that being helpful for in-store shopping across general merchandise categories as well. Particularly, if you're someone who thinks shopping in store can get a little bit overwhelming. And you're seeking or craving some of the merchandising tools or curation that's available online.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah, that's a good point. Young people, for them, the share who wanted in-store AI assistance only reached 20% versus everyone, which was 14%. So even young folks aren't completely convinced. All right folks, let's move to a final round, round three. We have The Random Scale where folks have to tell us where they land using The Random Scale. Suzy's going to kick us off for this one. Disney's streaming business turned a profit for the first time, writes Emma Roth of The Verge. The company made nearly $50 million in profit off its streaming portfolio of Disney+, Hulu and ESPN+. It's a small amount of profit, but it's a big profit swing. At this point last year, Disney's streaming portfolio lost over $500 million. So in the last year it's gone from $500 million in the red to $50 million in the black. The Random Scale, how should we view this Disney streaming profitability milestone? Your possible choices are, don't sleep on it, this is a significant milestone or Netflix can't even see Disney in its rear view mirror, so this isn't that big of a deal. Suzy.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

My vote is Netflix is king and will always be king. I think the comparison-

Marcus Johnson:

That wasn't an option.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

It's the rear view mirror option. It's the rear view mirror option.

Marcus Johnson:

There's nothing about king.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

There is nobody at Netflix that is worried about Disney+. It's not even apples to apples, it's multiple streaming services for Disney+, it's not even one. Netflix has seen growth in their user now it's global numbers, I think it was up 16, they were saying in global user numbers. Versus Disney+ in the US is just relatively flat. So it's also global numbers I understand, but it's hundreds of millions of users for Netflix versus the 50 ish million of users for Disney+. I just think you can't compare them. So I'm very happy that Disney has seen some sort of green situation and it definitely did a massive swing and turnaround, so that's great for them. But no big deal for Netflix.

Marcus Johnson:

Okay. Sarah?

Sarah Marzano:

Yeah, I think I would tend to agree in terms of whether or not Netflix is worried. It doesn't feel like an apples to apples comparison. I do think it is interesting to see as these streaming services mature, it come into focus what it takes to be profitable. And it's more than just having enough subscribers, right? You have to invest in really quality, original, exclusive content. And Disney has been spending a lot of money doing that over the past few years. More money than they were able to bring in from subscriptions. But you can see the tide kind of changing there. They are hiking up the subscription pricing. So the hope there is going to be that consumers see the content as valuable enough. I think subscription models are just hard to get right because you're going to have consumers constantly evaluating like, "Is this worth it to me?" And I think when you look broadly at streaming in general, a lot of the strategies are starting to kind of look like linear TV. So what's old is new again. So whether that's channel bundling, introducing ad-supported tiers, this new metric, I think it's hours per viewer. So Disney talking about experimenting with channels that just have content automatically playing. So addressing that fatigue of sitting down and choosing what to watch. So it's kind of looking a lot more like traditional TV.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah. Carina.

Carina Perkins:

Yeah. So I have invented my own new scale-

Marcus Johnson:

Ah, [inaudible 00:27:55].

Carina Perkins:

... and it's called, who cares? YouTube is the real threat to Netflix and Disney.

Marcus Johnson:

Oh.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Oh.

Marcus Johnson:

Tell me more.

Carina Perkins:

So Disney cited its big grossing films like Inside Out 2, but as both Suzy and Sarah pointed out, their subscription growth, if I can talk, isn't massive. So a lot of this profitability is coming from raising prices. Netflix has also been raising prices for its subscription tiers. But really profitability, there's going to be a ceiling, right? On how many times you can raise prices to keep increasing profitability. And at some point you need to look at other revenue streams and that's advertising. So I don't think YouTube is a kind of threat to them in terms of a direct competitor for viewers, but it is a competitor for advertising. And I think that that makes it really the thing that both Disney+ and Netflix should be worried about, rather than themselves. Netflix ad revenues were $0.5 billion this year, Disney+ were 0.97 and YouTube were $8.29 billion in 2024 according to our EMARKETER data, that's in the US.

Marcus Johnson:

[inaudible 00:29:07]. Mm-hmm.

Carina Perkins:

So yeah, that's my answer. I think they both need to be looking at YouTube because that's the real threat here.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah. The argument for Disney, the, don't sleep on it, this is a significant milestone, is that Disney streaming became profitable one quarter ahead of schedule, which doesn't seem like a big deal. But they were saying this when this service launched that they were going to hit profitability by this year. So they're on track in terms of what they were estimating, but they have got a lot of ground to make up to recoup their streaming investment. Robbie Whelan of The Journal was noting that since the launch of Disney+ in November 2019, Disney has lost over $11 billion to the streaming wars. So a profit of $50 million per quarter ain't going to do it, but I imagine that number's going to go up and up and up from now on. That's the hope at least for Disney. That's what we've got time for for the game of the week. Count the scores, this week's winner... Actually, we'll go third to first. [inaudible 00:30:10].

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Ooh, bronze first.

Sarah Marzano:

Bronze.

Marcus Johnson:

The bronze goes to America. Sarah gets the bronze medal, also known as last. Suzy gets the silver. And Carina of Great Britain wins the gold.

Carina Perkins:

Yes. Gold for Great Britain.

Marcus Johnson:

Of course-

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Sarah, you guys won too many during the Olympics.

Marcus Johnson:

... like always. Congratulations to Great Britain. Congratulations to Canada and the US.

Sarah Marzano:

Winning Isn't for Everyone.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Nike.

Marcus Johnson:

Nike commercial.

Sarah Marzano:

I wanted to say it in a really victorious way but now I'm just saying it in a sad way.

Marcus Johnson:

Well played. Let's move to the final segment of today's episode, it's of course, Dinner Party Data. All right, let's start with Carina who's going to tell us the most interesting thing she learned in this past week?

Carina Perkins:

So I thought I'd have a little look at some stuff about YouTube because I decided to talk about them in a question about Disney+ and Netflix. So-

Marcus Johnson:

Did you happen to find this whilst you were doing that research? Is that what happened? You didn't actually go and look for something else?

Carina Perkins:

No, I decided that YouTube was in my answer to the question and then I thought, "Oh, I'll do Dinner Party Data on YouTube."

Marcus Johnson:

So that's a yes. All right, go on.

Carina Perkins:

Isn't that what we're meant to do?

Marcus Johnson:

Great Britain.

Carina Perkins:

I don't understand. How have I broken rules?

Marcus Johnson:

You're supposed to take your weekends and allocate at least one day to do research for this segment.

Sarah Marzano:

That would be for someone who knew they were going to be on this show ahead of time.

Marcus Johnson:

Okay, fine.

Carina Perkins:

Yeah.

Marcus Johnson:

I may have asked people to be on very last minute slash an hour ago.

Carina Perkins:

And then [inaudible 00:31:41] to browse this menu.

Sarah Marzano:

I mean between last night and today. [inaudible 00:31:46].

Marcus Johnson:

Fair play. I should be lucky you showed up. [inaudible 00:31:49].

Carina Perkins:

You should be lucky you have any Dinner Party Data at all.

Marcus Johnson:

That's very true. All right, go.

Carina Perkins:

So globally, YouTube had over 2.49 billion monthly active users as of March 2024, that's up from 25 million in 2006. Users uploaded over 500 hours of video content every minute. India has the highest number of YouTube users.

Marcus Johnson:

Mm.

Carina Perkins:

Globally, males make up 54.4% and females 45.6% of YouTube's user base. However, in the US, females slightly outnumber males with a 51.4 to 48.6% split.

Marcus Johnson:

Very nice.

Carina Perkins:

And over 50% of YouTube users are Gen Z and Millennials.

Marcus Johnson:

50%.

Carina Perkins:

It's probably not that surprising. Yeah.

Marcus Johnson:

That is kind of surprising. I guess that speaks to just how much it's used throughout the generations, right? Because a lot of tech is focused on those younger folks and if it's 50-

Carina Perkins:

Well, yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Marcus Johnson:

... there's four generations in theory [inaudible 00:32:52] generation as well, but four kind of main generations in terms of population.

Carina Perkins:

Gen Xs.

Marcus Johnson:

So yeah, it sounds like it's about evenly split. Very nice. Let's go with silver medal, Suzy.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

So are you guys ready for this? I'm so excited about this. Today is National Tell A Joke Day in the USA.

Sarah Marzano:

Uh-oh.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

And it's hard to pinpoint when dad jokes became a phrase that we use in everyday life. Some people think it's all the way back to the ancient civilization where puns and silly jokes were important. And in the Middle Ages there were jesters who had riddles. But some also say that Bob Hope during the radio and TV rise was famous for his one-liners and cheesy puns because it was-

Marcus Johnson:

[inaudible 00:33:36] like, it's either jesters or Bob Hope. It depends [inaudible 00:33:40]-

Suzy Davidkhanian:

I'm taking you through the history of fun jokes.

Marcus Johnson:

Histrionics.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

The term dad jokes became popular in the 1980s. People think it was first used in 1987 in a Chicago Tribune article about how technically they're unfashionable and uncool and somewhat embarrassing. And yet everybody says them, and it's a way for dads and adults to bond with younger folks. Some fun facts about laughing, it's good for you. There's a lot of research that shows that 10 to 15 minutes of laughing can help you burn calories up to 40 calories. Which doesn't sound like a lot, but it's that extra something that you were thinking about eating. Laugh can improve memory in older adults. Hilarious movies have been shown to help increase movement in your blood vessels. It can improve your immunity, help regulate your blood sugars, improve sleep. And this I thought was the cutest, was laughter actually comes before speech, if you think about babies. They start to laugh before they start to talk. So with that, does anybody have a good dad joke or should I give you a couple?

Carina Perkins:

I've got one.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Oh, can you go first?

Carina Perkins:

Okay. I went shopping for a pair of camouflage pants, but I couldn't find any.

Marcus Johnson:

Okay.

Carina Perkins:

[inaudible 00:34:55] a retail [inaudible 00:34:56] joke for you there.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Why don't eggs tell jokes? Because they'd crack each other up. Come on you guys. Why did the bike fall over? Because it was two-tired. It has two tires.

Carina Perkins:

Okay.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Come on. Why did the... This is I'm leaving you on one of my best ones.

Carina Perkins:

I feel like, weren't we shortening this segment?

Marcus Johnson:

We're trying to. Yeah.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Why did the tomato turn red?

Marcus Johnson:

It's not going well.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

I'm going to keep going until you all laugh at one.

Marcus Johnson:

Okay.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

So this is it. Be ready.

Sarah Marzano:

[inaudible 00:35:30].

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Why did the tomato turn red? I didn't even give you the joke.

Marcus Johnson:

Oh, okay. Sorry.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Because it saw the salad dressing.

Marcus Johnson:

Okay, we're done. We're done, here. Don't worry, I'll save the joke segment. I told my friend they drew their eyebrows too high, they seem surprised. [inaudible 00:35:51].

Suzy Davidkhanian:

That [inaudible 00:35:52] actually quite funny.

Marcus Johnson:

You're welcome, [inaudible 00:35:53]. Let's move to... Sarah was trying not to laugh, but she did find it funny. Luckily it's a video podcast, Sarah. Okay, so everyone saw that you liked it.

Sarah Marzano:

I find all of this funny.

Marcus Johnson:

Nailed it.

Carina Perkins:

I'm feeling [inaudible 00:36:05].

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Guys, it's National Joke Day, so we had to pay tribute to it.

Marcus Johnson:

It's all a real thing.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Yes, it is.

Marcus Johnson:

All right. Sarah.

Sarah Marzano:

Okay. I went down a really dark journey of reading about New York State's plans to eradicate the lanternfly. Which includes some really... They're thinking about-

Marcus Johnson:

The lightning bug?

Sarah Marzano:

The lanternfly.

Marcus Johnson:

Oh, okay.

Sarah Marzano:

So should I explain what the lanternfly is?

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah, you should.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

No.

Sarah Marzano:

Is this just relevant for folks in the Northeast?

Marcus Johnson:

Probably.

Sarah Marzano:

It's an invasive species. It's been in the US for 10 years now, but really arrived in the Northeast in a significant way about three or four summers ago. They are not dangerous to humans, but they can cause a lot of damage to plants, which can have a significant economic impact. So here in New York, they've actually been instructing us to kill them on sight, but that has not had a meaningful-

Marcus Johnson:

Whoa. On sight.

Sarah Marzano:

... impact. Probably because of people like me who are a little bit too squeamish to go after them. But so they're sort of thinking now about introducing an invasive type of... Not invasive, a wasp that is a natural predator for lanternflies-

Marcus Johnson:

This can't end well.

Sarah Marzano:

... which feels just extremely dystopian. And I will spare listeners reading about what the wasps do to lanternflies, but it is going to keep me up at night. Anyway, in my reading of this, I found out some fun facts about New York State, which says that we are the third-biggest producer of wine in the US. Which I did not know after [inaudible 00:37:44]-

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Wow, that was buried really deep.

Carina Perkins:

In the Finger Lakes, probably.

Marcus Johnson:

What a pivot.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Yeah.

Sarah Marzano:

So anyway, so that's part of the reason that we're very concerned about lanternflies is that they're attracted to the grapes and that they'll ruin the vineyards. And we're the third-biggest producer of wine. There was a 2019 economic impact study of the wine industry in New York. The New York grape and wine industry directly creates 72,000 jobs and represents $2.8

billion in wages. I was like, "I could either go into what these wasps do to baby lanternflies or I can try to end this in a not nice [inaudible 00:38:26]."

Suzy Davidkhanian:

I'm laughing because I feel like this is what I do too. And now I understand.

Sarah Marzano:

What?

Marcus Johnson:

Okay. What happens-

Suzy Davidkhanian:

The starting on one topic to set up your other topic. It's my style, I like it.

Marcus Johnson:

Jesus. What happens when the wasps take over?

Suzy Davidkhanian:

[inaudible 00:38:42] the wine.

Sarah Marzano:

I didn't have time for this, but I guess Australia introduced some frogs. At some point cane frogs-

Marcus Johnson:

See, then the creatures just get bigger and bigger-

Sarah Marzano:

Exactly.

Marcus Johnson:

... we end up with dinosaurs again. This is insane.

Sarah Marzano:

Now the cane frog, so the pests of thing, it's insane.

Marcus Johnson:

Terrible.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

But we have to protect the wine.

Sarah Marzano:

There are researchers at Penn State who are looking into a much less terrifying solution that involves booby trapping the trees that the lanternflies-

Marcus Johnson:

Thank God. Okay. All right.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Technical term.

Sarah Marzano:

I couldn't just come on and told dad jokes [inaudible 00:39:14].

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Hey.

Carina Perkins:

Whoa.

Marcus Johnson:

All right, I've got one for you real quick. US National Park facts. Kayla Zhu, Visual Capitalist had these, so five for you quick. In 2023, US National Parks welcomed 93 million visitors, a 4% year-on-year increased from the previous year. Number two, total visits, that was unique, so visitors but total visits were 325 million, just shy of pre-pandemic levels. Number three, the most visited is...

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Yellowknife. No, not Yellowknife. What is the one that's yellow?

Marcus Johnson:

Okay. The Great Smoky Mountains.

Sarah Marzano:

Yellowstone?

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Yeah. Sorry.

Marcus Johnson:

The Great Smoky Mountains. The one that's yellow? The Great Smoky Mountains-

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Canadian.

Marcus Johnson:

... number one, which straddles the border between North Carolina and Tennessee. It's the most visited National Park in the country with three times the number of visitors, 13 million compared to second place Grand Canyon in Arizona, 4.7. And then a fraction behind that is Zion in Utah with 4.6 million. Number four, one thing that helps the Great Smokies retain the top spot each year is that it's so sprawling. Over half the US population could drive to the park within a day. And I was looking on Google Maps, about 20 to 25 states are within an eight-hour drive of it. And obviously, the population is concentrated in certain places. Last one, California is home to the highest number of National Parks at nine. Alaska has eight. Utah has five. So those three states, California, Alaska and Utah account for 1/3 of America's National Parks. And that is what we have time for. Thank you so much to my guests for hanging out with me today. Thank you of course, to the bronze medalist, Sarah Marzano of the USA.

Sarah Marzano:

Thanks for having me.

Marcus Johnson:

Thank you to our silver medalist, Suzy Davidkhanian of Canada.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Thanks for having me.

Marcus Johnson:

I nearly said Suzy David Canada.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

That I would've taken it. I've had to answer to lots of other random names.

Marcus Johnson:

And finally, our gold medalist is Carina Perkins of Great Britain.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Thanks Marcus. It's been a pleasure.

Marcus Johnson:

Thank you to you. Thank you. None of those felt genuine. Thank you to Victoria who edits the show. Stuart runs the team. Sophie does our social media. Lance runs our video podcast. And we hope to see you Monday for the Behind the Numbers Daily, that will be an EMARKETER podcast. Happiest of weekends.