


The Weekly Listen: What went wrong with online ads, is the streaming boom over, and how the First Amendment applies to social media

Audio



On today's podcast episode, we discuss what the hell happened—and is happening—to online ads, whether the video streaming boom is officially over, the next big wearable category, what happens when the First Amendment collides with social media, what the world would look like if there were only 100 people, and more. Tune in to the discussion with our forecasting writer Ethan Cramer-Flood and analysts Ross Benes and Blake Droesch.

Subscribe to the “Behind the Numbers” podcast on [Apple Podcasts](#), [Spotify](#), [Pandora](#), [Stitcher](#), [YouTube](#), Podbean or wherever you listen to podcasts. [Follow us on Instagram](#)



Episode Transcript:

Marcus Johnson:

This episode is made possible by Nielsen. What even is TV anymore? Who knows. I don't know. It's on phones, tablets, refrigerators, so make sure you're looking at everything. Everything.

Check out Nielsen's Upfronts/NewFronts Guide for the full picture. Visit nielsen.com for more information.

Hello everyone, and thanks for hanging out with us for the Behind the Numbers Weekly Listen. It's an eMarketer podcast that's made possible by Nielsen. This is the Friday show that... I had Nutella sticks for breakfast. I'm such a child.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

Oh, no.

Marcus Johnson:

What's wrong with me?

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

Not getting the day started right. That's...

Marcus Johnson:

I'm in a good place, Ethan. I feel terrible inside, actually. I'm your host Marcus Johnson, who doesn't feel well. In today's show, what went wrong with online ads? Is the video streaming boom officially over? Can rings be the next big wearable category? How does the First Amendment apply to social media? And what if the world was just 100 people? It would probably be amazing, wouldn't it? It would be so good. No offense to the 8 billion people who are currently here.

Ross Benes:

I'm not convinced. I lived in a small town for many years and-

Marcus Johnson:

No?

Ross Benes:

I'm not into this scenario.

Marcus Johnson:

Okay. Ross is out.

Blake Droesch:

You'd have to do a lot for yourself. Who do you think is going to package those Nutella sticks, Marcus?

Marcus Johnson:

That's true. I bring little to the... I always think this. If it came to it, it was an apocalypse and it was like, "All right, what skill do you? I'm a doctor. Okay, great, yeah. How about you? Carpenter. Brilliant, you could build houses. How about you? I can host things."

Blake Droesch:

You could host a podcast for no one.

Marcus Johnson:

"Shall I host a meeting? Do you need one of... Nothing? Okay. Then nevermind, I'll just sit over here." I don't bring a lot to the table, but luckily we've got three people who do.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

Heyo.

Marcus Johnson:

Join me for this episode. We have our principal forecasting writer, he's based in New York City, it's Ethan Cramer-Flood.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

It's springtime in New York.

Marcus Johnson:

Oh yeah? Good weather?

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

It's a total lie, but yeah, great weather this week.

Marcus Johnson:

Oh my God, good way to start the show.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

Great weather this week. I don't trust it, it'll be gone.

Marcus Johnson:

Probably. We're also joined by one of our senior analysts on the retail and e-commerce team, also based in the city, it's Blake Droesch.

Blake Droesch:

Hey, everybody. Good to be back.

Marcus Johnson:

Hey, fella. And finally, we have one of our senior analysts who covers everything, digital advertising and media, he's based just above the city, it's Ross Benes.

Ross Benes:

Hey, Marcus.

Marcus Johnson:

Hello, fella. So, what we have in store for you, we start with the story of the week. We're talking about some of the things going wrong with online ads, then we move to the debate of the week, is our middle segment. We end with dinner party data, that's the random trivia segment at the very end. But we start, of course, with the story the week.

So, what went wrong with online ads? Something, according to Kate Lindsay of The Atlantic. She writes that, "The internet has long been clogged with ads, but something different is happening today," she says. "Gone are the days of simple banner ads. Now nothing is safe from brands trying to sell us stuff." Instagram launched ads in search results. YouTube is testing pause ads on TV. Amazon introduced ads to its previously ad-free streaming service. "In the adpocalypse," she writes, "every company is an ad company."

So, some of those other companies I mentioned have always been ad companies, Instagram, YouTube, Amazon becoming a more significant ad company, but she's talking about Uber, Walgreens, Planet Fitness, basically everyone getting into the ad game and ads living any place, really. Ross, I'll start with you. What did you make of this piece by Kate Lindsay about what went wrong with online ads?

Ross Benes:

It did a good job of providing the consumer perspective, because we're often talking about how retail media is exploding and look at all this money that's coming into all these different retail networks. And we say this as a good thing, because that's interesting for our clients that it generates revenue and investment for them. But from the consumer experience, it's absolutely terrible. Who wants to open up their Uber app and see a 90-second video ad because they just want to see what time they might get home. And that's becoming an increasingly common experience, whether you're ordering food, staying at a hotel, getting a cab ride, you're getting intrusive ads forced on you through your phone in every experience that you go through now.

Marcus Johnson:

So, what happens? Does usage on these apps start to pull back? Do people just deal with them the way we've dealt with ads in other parts of our lives?

Ross Benes:

They just put up with them, just like we always have.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

Yeah, nothing's going to change. I was struck by reading the article about all of these online ads and how annoying they are. And while reading it, I was interrupted time and time and time again by an online ad, and I am an Atlantic subscriber, I have a great deal of respect for The Atlantic, that's a great publication, I pay them money to access their work. And here I am, reading their article and I see six different ads every couple of paragraphs as she complains about the prevalence of ads. This is just how it is, but I'm not complaining. I have very little sympathy for this kind of whining.

The Atlantic is doing what it needs to do to survive. Google and Amazon are doing what they need to do to increase profits, this is inevitably how it's going to go, that's their responsibility to their shareholders, is to maximize the value that they can derive and extract as much revenue as they can. We're all going to take it. Some of us have maybe forgotten what life was like watching TV for decades and decades. There's ads constantly, all the time, everywhere. Maybe we got used to not seeing them as much in the early days of streaming, but that was never realistic. The stuff is going to be everywhere, and I doubt that much is going to come of

it in terms of any sort of protest movement or users moving away from these services. They're going to stick with it.

Blake Droesch:

I'd also add that, a lot of people have forgotten what the internet was like 15 years ago in the era of just unregulated popup ads and how much of the wild, wild west it was and how annoying it was to just get constantly spammed by these different popups and having to close different browsers. That was no walk in the park at all. And yes, the internet was somewhat more open at that point, but there is... And while yes, everything has become an ad, at least there's a little bit more structure to the ecosystem.

And also, as a consumer speaking, there are mechanisms to the digital ad environment that can be helpful at times when targeted and successful, and it's not just strictly spamming. Not to say that the overabundance of everything as an ad network isn't annoying either, but I also don't think that many of these companies are going to stick with these super intrusive ads if there is consumer backlash. So, I think digital advertising is still very much evolving, and it is an ecosystem that can self-correct to a certain degree based on consumer feedback.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

The reason that these current services don't really have a lot to fear, is that the only way that they're going to be threatened by competitors, is if those competitors basically emulate their model. There's concern out there that people like to talk about how ChatGPT is going to create a new search engine that is going to be an existential threat to Google, but it's really only going to be an existential threat to Google if they can also find a way to monetize it. That likely means it's going to become an advertising hell scape just like Google.

And the same thing with TikTok. TikTok is supposed to be this big threat to Facebook and Instagram, et cetera, but really the only way TikTok is going to achieve its potential, is if it also draws in an equivalent amount of advertising revenue or turns itself into retail media hell scape via this e-commerce push. So, all the ways that the other competitors that we could turn to to avoid ads are going to have to go in the same direction, or they're not going to succeed either. So, the incumbents are in a safe position here.

Marcus Johnson:

It does feel a bit like a race to the bottom though. There was a quote in the article saying, "When I go searching for something to buy, it comes with a layer of distrust. Is the vacuum cleaner I'm looking at an organic result or another sneakily sponsored ad?" I was liking it to when people in New York don't wait for people to get off the train before they board themselves. And so, you start doing it because you live in New York and you can't wait for everybody else, so you start doing it, but it makes New York a worse place to live as a result.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

Oh, it's terrible. I don't think any of us would deny that these experiences are terrible. I'm old enough to remember when amazon.com and google.com were pleasant websites to visit. They were elegantly designed and you could find what you wanted and they seemed to be there to serve your needs. Nowadays, they seem to exist not to give me the information or products that I'm seeking, but to give me the information or products that they want to give me, which is based on whoever's paying them to give me whatever it is that they want to give me, not what I want to see. It's terrible. Amazon.com has turned into an absolutely stressful and awful place to do your business, but we're all going to keep doing it. We're not here to talk about whether any of this is pleasant, but it is what it is.

Marcus Johnson:

Right. But Blake-

Blake Droesch:

Because at the end of the day... Sorry, go ahead.

Marcus Johnson:

No, really quickly. You can have retail for us. We were talking about how, if Amazon does continue to train this direction though, that people will start using it a bit less, even though they're not going to disappear from it, they will start shopping less on it because of a poor customer experience.

Blake Droesch:

I would disagree that the customer experience compared to any other way of shopping is less convenient. It might be somewhat less pleasant because of the advertising, and yes, it is a little bit blurry in terms of, are you getting what you're actually searching for? Is that optimizing the

customer experience? Versus who's paying to surface what product in front of you at any given time? But Amazon has built a business around convenience, and they're still doing that really well despite the fact that there is more advertising influence on the platform. But you've got a business where 75% of households in the US can get basically whatever they want, most things within reason, the next day via a few clicks at a relatively competitive price. I think they become so customer-centric that they are allowed to flip the switch and make things a little bit more prickly on the backend to make a whole bunch of revenue with their advertising network.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah. Final thing here, Ross, I'll throw this to you. In the piece, Ms. Lindsay was talking about ads coming out of our screens and following us in the real world, saying, "You don't even have to really be online in the traditional sense to be inundated with ads. Buying groceries? Here comes a smart shopping cart that will suggest items based on what you're already shopping for. Going on vacation? The ads on your Marriott hotel room TV will soon be tailored to the personal data you shared in your booking." United also looking to do the same thing on planes, personalized ads on the screens, the backs of seats. What do you make of this idea of the online ads coming out of the screen and following us around?

Ross Benes:

Well, it sounds a lot like the music video from Take On Me by A-ha, where the comic book comes out and goes into the real world and it goes on the adventure with that girl and has a great little ending. But this seems like a more corporate, product-based version of that. So, an ad jumping out of the screen and follow me around I don't think would be as touching as the A-ha song, but that's what I thought of.

Marcus Johnson:

New reference is amazing.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

This way of doing business is what keeps these things affordable and usable. I think there's probably a little bit more offense taken by Amazon, and particularly now what they're doing with Prime, because we all give Amazon money every month to be Prime members. The vast majority of households in the country already give them money, but Facebook is free,

Instagram is free, Google is free. Who has a right to complain about ads when you're not giving them any money? So, I think they're all-

Marcus Johnson:

It's easy to forget.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

... pretty much off the hook forever unless it gets so overwhelmingly annoying that it doesn't function. Whereas I can see where Amazon, you're like, "Man, I already pay you. I give you guys money when I shop and I give you guys money to be members, and you still drown me in ads." That's different, but we're not going to do anything about it.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah, good point. All right, gents, that's all we've got time for the story of the week. We move swiftly to the debate of the week. Today's segment, Make the Case.

Where our panel, Ethan, Ross, and Blake present the for and against arguments for each of the following questions based on three news stories. Two contestants face off per question, except in the last question, we're going to have three folks going head-to-head-to-head. Also, the following takes don't necessarily reflect the analyst's personal views. Their job is to just present the best case regardless and offer objective analysis.

For question one, Ross is going up against Ethan, and we're talking about whether the video streaming boom is officially over, as a question from our senior director of briefings, Jeremy Goldman, after looking through some recent antenna research. It pointed out that the growth rate for premium SVOD, subscription video on demand services, fell from 2022 to 2023, going from 22% to 10% growth rate of premium SVOD services. But is the streaming boom officially over? Ross is going to be arguing the video streaming boom is officially over. One minute on the clock, make the case.

Ross Benes:

Well, within just a few years of each other, you saw Peacock and Disney+, Apple TV+, HBO Max launch and all those services were sold at a huge discount. They gave away a lot of promotions, they basically gave away the service for free. So, they were also spending very heavily on content to acquire new subscribers. Right now, we're at a point where there aren't

any big streaming launches on the horizon, aside from a possible sports streaming venture. The prices have risen substantially, the discounts are over, and content spending is being cut in light of increased financial pressures on these companies to turn a profit, and due to Hollywood strikes that took off last year. So, people aren't going to be adding more streaming services, is what I'm getting at. There's not going to be a huge content boom, there's not going to be a huge boom in the number of streaming services that are out, and the number of subscriptions that people have will shrink.

Marcus Johnson:

Ethan, the video streaming boom isn't officially over. Make the case.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

Yeah, so I took this side of the argument because I wanted to flash some forecasting to statistics, just to brag about what we have. There's no doubt that the current era of extremely high growth is probably over, but I don't think the story is over. So, we've got 250 million people in this country, according to our figures, that are going to be viewing subscription OTT this year. That doesn't leave a whole lot of extra space. Most people are already doing this, and indeed, our growth figures for the top line are in the way low single digits in terms of viewership. Now that's at the umbrella level. There are individual platforms that are still experiencing high growth, particularly in the fast area that's not sub O2T, that's free, but some of the smaller paid ones are still doing well on growth.

But the reason I think the story isn't over, is the flip side, it's the addressable market that isn't there yet. There are still a lot of people paying for traditional TV, and I don't think the story of TV's death is over yet, that's going to continue to play out. So, we've got 111 million people that are still traditional paid TV viewers, something like 50 million households are traditional paid TV households. Now, most of those people are also watching streaming and they're paying for it, but that's the wallet share that's going to become available as those people increasingly cut the cord. That's a lot more people that are still likely to eventually cut the cord, even if it takes 10 or 20 years or 30 years or whatever. And those people are in the streaming world, but they're going to have more money available to them to buy more streaming services as they cut the cord more, so that's why I think the story still has some legs.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah, on those two numbers. Yeah, the share of households that still have traditional paid TV, cable if you will. This year, 40% of households still have it, so there's a lot of folks, but yeah, they could already have streaming, but to your point, the share of wallet moving more and more over. And then the second number you had, the 250 million, another way to put that, 66% of Americans will be subscription OTT viewers this year, 67% next year, 68% the following, so it is creeping up, but it has slowed right down, as Ethan was mentioning. That's folks watching ad free and ad supported streaming services.

All right, question two. Ross and Ethan tag teaming against Blake for this one. The next big wearable category, is it rings? Is the question. "Forget VR goggles, Samsung wants your next new smart gadget to be on your finger," writes Kit Eaton of Inc, noting fashionable wearable tech is getting a big boost from the device giant Samsung with the launch of its health and fitness focused Galaxy Ring that's sprinkled with AI. Technology site and gadget reports the Galaxy Ring will feature sensors that track its wearers movements, heart rate and breathing, and can be paired with Samsung's smart watches for more accurate data that can be fed into a new Samsung Health platform that gives users a deeper, more holistic understanding of their health.

But the question is, are rings actually the next big wearable device category? Ross and Ethan, starting with Ross, they're arguing that rings are the next big wearable device category. One minute combined, make the case.

Ross Benes:

Well, rings don't look as clunky or as stupid as the wearable goggles. So, if you want to have an advanced wearable thing, you can wear a ring and no one will probably even know you're doing it. You could go out in public pretty easily with them and not get people staring at you. They're easy to hide, they're easy to store, and they are convenient.

Marcus Johnson:

It's like a QVC ad. Go on, Ethan, anything to add to that?

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

I don't know how I ended up on the pro side of this argument. Unless these things were forged in the heart of Mount Doom, I don't really have any interest in rings, but I think probably other people will. So, how do we decide what counts as a successful, big category? If you think

about smart watches, those were successful. Smart watches are successful, but they weren't game changers. A lot of people have them, a lot of people like them, most people don't. The successful smartwatch companies mostly got bought up by bigger tech companies, but it was still a good new device that a lot of people liked. I could see the rings being that. I could see rings being successful and useful to some and popular to some without necessarily changing the world the way that the smartphone did, or the way that CTV has done. But yeah, sure, why not?

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah, smartwatches. The category, to pull up some numbers on the fly, you're talking about that 25% of the population are smartwatch users, that's 67 million people. So, even if they get half that market, a quarter of that market, that's still tens of millions of people, potentially. But Blake, you're arguing that rings aren't the next big wearable device category. Make the case. Won't be too hard it seems.

Blake Droesch:

Yeah. No, I just wanted to mention that before we started recording, both Ross and Ethan came to me separately and said that they wanted to take the pro ring side. So, even though we're not always truthfully speaking about our opinions in this case, this is, in fact, the actual opinion of the analyst. But yeah, no, I don't really see it, because I don't really fully understand what the ring can offer that something around the wrist, be it a watch or one of those fitness bracelets can't offer. You can check your pulse by feeling your wrist just as easily as you can in a wear, so it should be just as easy to get those metrics with a wrist, and that's something that's not going to be sitting on your finger, which contrary to what Ross says, could be very in the way for if you're writing and tapping on your phone. And not to mention, it looks really stupid. So, I don't think that there are going to be that many people who are going to be into them.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

That's tough.

Marcus Johnson:

Okay, good arguments, gents. We move to question three. Everyone's participating in this, because we've got three separate arguments to be made. Question is about how the First

Amendment applies to social media. "Both Florida and Texas passed laws regulating how social media companies moderate speech online," writes David McCabe of the New York Times. He was noting the laws, if upheld, could fundamentally alter how the platforms police their sites, explaining that after Facebook, Twitter and YouTube barred then President Trump in the wake of the January 6th, 2021 riots at the Capitol, Florida made it illegal for tech companies to ban from their sites a candidate for office in the state, in Florida.

Texas later passed its own law prohibiting platforms from taking down political content. The Supreme Court is now reviewing those laws this week, it has been. "What's at stake is whether they can be forced to carry content they don't want to," says Daphne Keller, a lecturer at Stanford Law School. The question, though, we've decided to talk about isn't what the Supreme Court is going to rule per se, but what are platforms actually like? And so, there are a few versions or flavors of what these platforms could actually be like. Blake is going to be arguing that platforms are like newspapers and may publish what they want without government interference. Make the case.

Blake Droesch:

Yeah, newspapers can publish what they want without government interference up to a point, right? They are protected under free speech, but a newspaper can't be necessarily advocating for the incitement of violence or genocide or anything like that. It is subject to censors and also lawsuits for libel, which has been the case. And also, if someone writes an unhinged letter to the editor in a newspaper, they don't have to publish it. And a digital media outlet, like a digital newspaper, also can have guidelines in their comment section. So, if things go off the rails there, they also reserve the right.

The problem and which, with social media, which no matter what old world institution you compare it to, is that the proliferation of the activity on social media and the sheer number of people using them and contributing to the discourse is at such great a scale that if you create a framework and say, "It's like a newspaper," sure, it can be like a newspaper, but the scale of it is inherently going to be much larger and much harder to enforce with any policy that you attach to it.

Marcus Johnson:

So, that was newspapers. Ethan arguing platforms are like private shopping centers, not newspapers. Private shopping centers open to the public, but required to let visitors say what

they want. Make the case.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

I like the private shopping center analogy because these platforms are fundamentally private corporations, they're profit-seeking entities that have a right to determine what happens on their virtual property, particularly with regard to something that might be harming their ability to make money. They have a financial responsibility to shareholders, and the idea that the government can force them to carry content that is demonstrably going to harm their bottom line and make it more difficult for them to turn a profit or even be sustainable operations, seems a little ridiculous to me.

So, if you have a shopping center and your lobby and all of your hallways are completely filled with protestors, that is going to ruin your ability to function, it's going to stop people from shopping in your shops and you're going to go out of business. So, you have a right to say, "No, we're going to clear these people out of here." What you can't do is stop one person from saying something, and particularly if you can't decide that this person's saying something political in this corner is allowed, and this person in that corner isn't allowed if you're in a shopping mall and it's a public place, but you can stop the whole place from being swarmed with people undertaking political activities.

And so, that seems like it should be their right as private companies to say, "Hey, man. We're here to sell ads and this is going to stop us from selling ads, so we don't want this here."

Marcus Johnson:

So, Blake was arguing platforms are like newspapers. Ethan just gave you the case that platforms are like private shopping centers. Ross is arguing platforms are like phone companies and must transmit everyone's speech. Make the case.

Ross Benes:

Well, platforms are like phone companies and a modern utility because they're based on user to user communication. So, the phone company, it's people talking to each other, not necessarily going through some sort of professional outlet, and you have some of that here with the platforms. But that doesn't mean that there would be no regulation, or that they wouldn't be able to curb what can be even said through some of these channels, because

phone companies have faced legal battles in the past, some of which they were successful, but some of which they weren't.

And during the early '90s, there was a Supreme Court case... Was actually late '80s, a Supreme Court case, Sable versus FCC over phone sex, and there became an unclear line between indecent and obscene speech. And basically, phone operators shied away from this type of content, because they thought they would be in legal jeopardy if they pushed phone sex hotlines. So, with Facebook, if they were treated like a phone line, they would have some guidelines of what they could and couldn't do, because there would still be a pushback against them and they would still end up butting up against some free speech rights even if they were a phone company.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah. Fantastic arguments, gents. It could be another potential patchwork court of laws. David McCabe in the New York Times writing, "If the Supreme Court says Texas and Florida laws are constitutional and they take effect, some legal experts speculate the companies could create versions of their feeds specifically for those states." Although it does seem as though some of the folks in the Supreme Court are leaning towards, "No, these laws aren't going to be able to stand." The timeline on this, the court heard arguments from both sides this week and will decide by June. All right, folks. Excellent middle segment. Let's move to final segment we have for you in today's show, it's of course dinner party data.

It's the part of the show where we tell you about the most interesting thing we've learned this week. Let's go, Ross.

Ross Benes:

So, you might think that clouds don't weigh much, because they look so nice and fluffy in the sky. But I found out from the BBC that a cloud can weigh a million tons. A lot of this is just due to the massive surface area that they cover, so there's not a lot of weight per square foot, but if you have a cloud that's over a kilometer long, it usually has about one kilogram per meter in weight density, that can result in it being a million tons. So, if you dropped cloud on someone, you would squash them Roadrunner coyote style.

Marcus Johnson:

Blake, you're next.

Blake Droesch:

This week I learned a fascinating fact about the story-

Marcus Johnson:

We'll decide, we'll see. We'll see.

Blake Droesch:

Do you know where the term treadmill comes from, Marcus?

Marcus Johnson:

Of course-

Blake Droesch:

Where does it come from?

Marcus Johnson:

... I don't. Whoa, let me finish the sentence. I said of course I don't.

Blake Droesch:

Oh, okay.

Marcus Johnson:

It comes from something.

Blake Droesch:

It has English origins. So, a treadmill is actually, it used to be a way to manually grind grains. So, basically, they had a resistance, perpetual stepladder that you would step on and it would grind grains in a mill, hence the word treadmill. And in Victorian England, they put them in the workhouses and the prisons, so if you were sentenced to manual labor, you would have to spend much of your time on a treadmill for most of the day in order to prevent idle behavior amongst the prisoners, as well as promote productivity so you could help grind the grains that they used for making bread and everything like that. Isn't that interesting? Shout out to my girlfriend who is a professor of Victorian literature, who is teaching Charles Dickens and told me that fact.

Ross Benes:

I like pivoting the dinner party data to just be dinner party facts.

Marcus Johnson:

I probably should change the name.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

Yeah, you should just change it.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah. Most of the segments are poorly named.

Blake Droesch:

I've already forgotten how much a cloud weighs, so what use is the data really doing?

Marcus Johnson:

Okay, keep tuning in listeners, don't listen to Blake. So, it went from forced labor to trying to work out.

Blake Droesch:

Right. Yeah, exactly. Trying to stay fit.

Marcus Johnson:

Vicious society.

Ross Benes:

For her dissertation, she should call it, "From Prisons to Peloton."

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

Heyo. Look at that. No charge.

Ross Benes:

That one's free.

Blake Droesch:

That's great.

Marcus Johnson:

Well, you should charge her. Ethan.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

I just have one data point and it's related to the movies and the box office, because that's one of my favorite topics. So, Dune part two came out this past weekend and it had a very successful opening weekend, 80 or \$90 million I think for the US-Canada combined, and that is about double the opening weekend take that Dune part one had. And Dune part one ended up grossing about \$430 million, which suggests that Dune part two is going to get well over half a billion, which suggests that we have a successful mega blockbuster. And that's great to see, because some of us have been alarmed at the narrative that sci-fi, fantasy, superhero movies are on their deathbed, because we have had a very, very difficult stretch of failures and flops for quite a while now.

But Dune part two is proving, like Dune part one did for that matter, that if you just make it good, it will be extraordinarily successful. People love this movie, it's going to make tons and tons of money. And the big difference between it and the succession of flops given to us by DC and Marvel recently, and Zach Snyder's awful Netflix sci-fi bonanza, is that Dune part two is really, really, really good. It's getting phenomenal critical reviews and people like it, so make good sci-fi, fantasy, superhero movies and they will continue to make billions of dollars.

Marcus Johnson:

Dune is an average film. That's right, I said it.

Blake Droesch:

Yeah, it is.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

And no spoilers, I'm going to go see it this weekend.

Marcus Johnson:

No, no, no, no, without spoiling anything.

Blake Droesch:

I haven't seen the second one. Dune one.

Marcus Johnson:

Without spoiling anything, I just don't... Yeah, average. Two as well. Well, make your own. But without spoiling anything, I just don't understand why they all just have knives. Where are the guns? They have one type of guns, it's like a sniper rifle and no one uses them. They have anti-aircraft guns, the ships that they fly around have guns and everyone's running at each other with knives. This is 10,000 years in the future.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

You're failing your nerd credentials horribly.

Marcus Johnson:

Tell me.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

They all have body shields that block the laser guns, that's why they have to fight in close combat with the knives. Did you even watch the 1984 movie or Dune part one?

Blake Droesch:

Honestly, Marcus, that was really embarrassing. I'm embarrassed for you.

Marcus Johnson:

No, but why do they have sniper rifles then?

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

You want to blow up ships and, I don't know, things that don't have shields.

Marcus Johnson:

Sniper rifles? No, but they have guns.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

They have guns.

Marcus Johnson:

A few people have guns.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

They have guns and they use the guns. You can use giant guns, but for direct combat, they all have personal shields.

Marcus Johnson:

It's a huge hole in the story.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

No, you're disqualified from all future conversations.

Marcus Johnson:

People fighting on sands with small kitchen knives, kitchen utensils.

Ross Benes:

Did you guys see the popcorn holder?

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

Yeah.

Ross Benes:

That looks kind of cool.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

Yeah.

Marcus Johnson:

What's that?

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

Unfortunately, they don't have that around. I think that's only in LA, right?

Ross Benes:

Oh, okay.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

I don't think they have that in New York, but I'll be keeping an eye out.

Ross Benes:

It looks like the big...

Blake Droesch:

The worm.

Ross Benes:

Yeah, I was going to say sand monster. You have to reach through to put your hand into the popcorn, they have it as an extension on the cup.

Marcus Johnson:

Oh, that's clever.

Ross Benes:

Yeah.

Marcus Johnson:

That's cleverer than the film. All right. It's a bad movie. There, I said it. Okay, so it's not real quick, this is going to take a long time. It won't. If the world was 100 people, it'd be great. Unless you're Ross, then it would be horrible.

Ross Benes:

Yeah.

Marcus Johnson:

So, where would they live? So, basically this is taking the world and breaking it into percentages. 100 people, 100%. And so, 59 people would live in Asia, that's because it's 59%, so that's how this works. So, if the world were 100 people, 59 would live in Asia, 18 in Africa, 9 in Europe, 7 in North America, 6 in South America, just 1 in Australia. Lucky devil. 56 would live in cities, 44 would not. What languages would they speak? 19 would speak English, 14 would speak Mandarin Chinese, 8 would speak Hindi, 7 Spanish, 4 would speak French, 3 standard Arabic, and 3 Bengali.

What religion would they follow? 32 would be Christians, 23 would be Muslim, 16 would be unaffiliated, 15 would be Hindu, there'd be 7 Buddhists, and 7 would practice a mix of other religions. How old would they be? 33 of the 100 would be teens or kids, 53 most would be between 20 and 60, and 14 people would be over 60. How many could read and write? Of those aged 15 and older, 60 could read and write, 10 could not. A few others for you. 75 of those 100 people would have access to clean drinking water, 25 would not. 60 people would have access to the internet, 40 would not. 40 would have access to a Meta app of the 100. Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger. 40 of the 100 would have access to one of those. And the last one, this is shocking. More people in the world would smoke than own a car. If the world was 100 people, 22 would smoke and 17 would own a car.

Blake Droesch:

Wait, so does that mean 17% of the people in the world own a car, and 22% of the population smokes?

Marcus Johnson:

Yep.

Blake Droesch:

So, why don't you just frame it that way. You don't have to make this metaphor for 100 people, you could just say it's crazy that the larger percentage of the world smokes than drives a car. I'll tell you, if there are only 100 people on the earth, I would be smoking and driving a really cool car.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

Tough crowd today for Marcus.

Marcus Johnson:

I know. So glad you're here.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

You failed to plug the fact that our own forecasting team could provide similar data, because we got all these worldwide tech consumer metrics and they're compared against the overall population.

Marcus Johnson:

I did get some of these from our team.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

Okay.

Marcus Johnson:

So, here are all the sources. I used the UN for where people live, ages, and drinking water numbers. Ethnolog and Berlitz for languages spoken. Pure Research for religion and age data. World Economic Forum for literacy figures. World Health Organization for smoking stats. PD Insurance, carparts.com, and The Drive for car ownership. Meta for their own numbers, and our own forecasts for some of the internet related ones. I spent way too long on this. I spent about a good three days, just on something that Blake hated.

Blake Droesch:

Sorry. It was nice. It was a good effort. I feel bad now that I know how much effort you put into it.

Marcus Johnson:

Story of my life. That's what we've got time for today's episode. Thank you so much to my guests, regardless of how they treat me. Thank you to Blake.

Blake Droesch:

Great to be here as always, Marcus.

Marcus Johnson:

Thank you to Ross.

Ross Benes:

Thanks, Marcus.

Marcus Johnson:

Thank you to, Ethan.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

I'll see you in a few weeks when it's cold and terrible again.

Marcus Johnson:

A few weeks?

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

Yeah, I'm just expecting March... You know March always stabs you in the back.

Marcus Johnson:

Oh.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

It gets nice, like now.

Marcus Johnson:

Ethan's like, "Don't bother me for a show for a while, please."

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

Whenever the next time I see you is, it's going to be 20 degrees and freezing and I'm going to be bitter again.

Marcus Johnson:

Thanks to Victoria who edits the show, James [inaudible 00:38:57] who runs the team, Sophie who does our social media, and Lance who runs our video podcast. Thanks to everyone for

listening in, we hope to see you on Monday for the Behind the Numbers Daily, an e-Marketer podcast made possible by Nielsen. Happy weekends.