

The Weekly Listen: Social media's future is 'blank,' replacing TikTok and Twitter, and the fight for the car screen

Audio

On today's episode, we discuss whether social media in the future will become less social or if it will go away altogether, what the streaming wars' battle royale looks like, how easy it would be to replace Twitter and TikTok, how people think their demographics are portrayed in ads, the fight for the car screen, where Americans have moved in the last 10 years, and more. Tune in to the discussion with our director of reports editing Rahul Chadha, analyst Blake Droesch, and vice president of Briefings Stephanie Taglianetti.

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Episode Transcript:

Marcus Johnson:

Hello everyone, and thanks for hanging out with us for the Behind the Numbers weekly listen, an eMarketer podcast made possible by Cint. This is the Friday show that has strong feelings

about Suzy's tomato garden, AKA a tiny plants on the windowsill.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

It's now a farm, I heard.

Marcus Johnson:

Oh, don't listen to those people. I'm your host, Marcus Johnson. In today's show, what's next for social media?

Blake Droesch:

I don't know if social media as a model has really been around long enough to say that it can't ultimately remain in that sweet spot where it's profitable and still has a good user experience.

Marcus Johnson:

The streaming wars battle royal.

Rahul Chadha:

And then even with the vMVPDs, which look the most like old school cable TV, are drawing comparatively small numbers. And I think that means either consumers don't understand the product or they're happy to hopscotch around individual streaming services as it suits them.

Marcus Johnson:

Why can't Twitter and TikTok be easily replaced?

Stephanie Taglianetti:

But that "network effect" that's carrying Twitter's lifeline, that's only going to work if you grow your network, and we all know that that's not happening for Twitter.

Marcus Johnson:

Room for improvements in ad portrayals of multicultural audiences, the fight for the car screen, and where Americans have moved in the last 10 years.

Joining me for this episode, we have three people. Let's meet them. We start with our vice president of everything briefings based normally out of New Jersey, but she's in our New York office today. It's Stephanie Taglianetti.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Hello, mate.

Marcus Johnson:

Hello. She did this before the recording and it was just as bad. It might be getting worse, Stephanie, to be honest, but I appreciate the effort. We're also joined by one of our senior analysts who covers retail and e-commerce for us, based out of New York and in the New York office as well today. It's Blake Droesch.

Blake Droesch:

Hello everyone.

Marcus Johnson:

Hello, hello. And finally, we're joined by one of our directors of reports editing. He is based out of upstate New York and we call him Rahul Chadha.

Rahul Chadha:

Hey Marcus, happy to be here.

Marcus Johnson:

Hey fella. So folks, what do we have in store for you? We'll look at what's next for social media. What is the next chapter? What does that look like? Then we move on to the Game of the Week where our contestants will go head-to-head-to-head to try and give us the best takeaways they can from each of the four stories we have for you to win the championship belt. And then Dinner Party Data. It's where we talk about some random trivia. We start of course with a Story of the Week.

What's next for social media? Well, it appears social media has a few ways it can go. We're going to talk about some of them. We're going to talk about whether it's less social in the future, whether it's doomed to die, or any other number of potential futures that might exist for social media as it enters the next chapter of its life.

But we'll start with the less social theory first. So Brian X. Chen of the New York Times thinks the future of social media is a lot less social. He writes that today, Instagram and Facebook feeds are full of ads. TikTok and Snapchat are stuffed with influencer videos, and soon Twitter

posts that gain the most visibility will come mostly from subscribers who pay for the exposure. And so social media is, in many ways, becoming less social.

Here's science communications professor at the University of Illinois Chicago, Zizi Papacharissi, who thinks platforms as we knew them are over, having outlived their utility. Folks, your thoughts on this theory that the future of social media is a lot less social?

Rahul Chadha:

I mean, I think one of the fundamental questions is how are we going to define social media in the future? I think for a long time, the very idea is predicated on joining a network where you can connect with friends and family. And if those connections are going to be displaced by content creators that you might not have a personal relationship and that's going to be the predominant model, yeah, that might be one future for social media. But to me that's almost akin to an old model where you're just watching a TV channel and somebody's putting out a bunch of programming and trying to get as high viewership as they can. So does that constitute a social media platform? I'm not sure.

Blake Droesch:

My prediction is that in the future, people are going to be less interested in posting the day-to-day activities in their life on to this medium-sized network where it goes beyond the people that are sort of your inner circle, but you're not posting publicly as a content creator. So I think the days of Facebook and Instagram where you're posting content to a larger network of people you know, people you may have met once or twice and everyone in between, that's sort of fallen out of favor.

So what we're seeing now is the really small communities which could really easily be replaced by messaging apps, and then basically the larger type of consumption with entertainment and creators that Rahul is talking to. So I think it's really sort of just that hollowing out, which is really the core of what we've come to know as social network usage, whether it's on Facebook and Instagram. And that's definitely, I could see that factor sort of dropping out over the next couple of years when it comes to social media usage,

Marcus Johnson:

Ethan Zuckerman agrees with you. Professor of public policy at UMass Amherst thinks, and I hope this is the direction it goes in, but thinks the future is that you're a member of dozens of

different communities, like you were saying, Blake. Because as human beings, that's how we are. Big social networks made connecting people with brands a priority over connecting them with other people, so some users started seeking community-oriented apps devoted to specific hobbies and issues.

Mr. Chen of the New York Times outlining two major benefits of smaller communities other than that's how we operate in the real world. One, small networks create forums for specific communities, including people who are marginalized, and two, smaller communities can also relieve some social pressure of using social media, especially for younger people.

Stephanie, what do you think about the future of social media being a lot less social? Well,

Stephanie Taglianetti:

It's funny, I was sitting next to Debbie Williamson, who's our principal analyst of social media, and she saw that headline and immediately perked up and said, "No, that's not true. This is what I argue about in my job." And then the secondary point she made was anecdotal, that when she posts on Facebook, she gets more engagement on those posts than on any other platform.

But I have to disagree. I've seen my Facebook network sort of wither away over the last few years, and the only people that I'm still seeing regularly in my feed are those delinquents from high school who I actually am not social with in real life. So I've just kind of seen that deprecate into nothing, and then all of the content from creators that I'm seeing is not even relevant. So I don't have a super great outlook for Facebook.

Marcus Johnson:

So one other theory is that social media isn't going to become more social. It's actually just... It's doomed. There's no way that it can actually survive. And so Ellis Hamburger, former Snapchat employee who now works at The Browser Company, was writing a piece in The Verge and thinks social media is doomed to die. Pointing out that unlike most other businesses on earth that live and die by their customers demand, social media services are caught trying to satisfy both their users and the people actually paying for it all, investors and advertisers. So the problem being that the needs of these groups, customers versus advertisers and investors, the needs of these groups are dramatically different.

Rahul, how much do you subscribe to the idea that social media is keeping its head above water at the minute, but it really is just kind of doomed to die regardless of whatever iteration or platform comes along?

Rahul Chadha:

Yeah, I mean I think that piece you referenced linked out to another piece that Cory Doctorow wrote on WIRED, which was, I don't know if I could say this, but it's titled, I think the in Enshittification of TikTok. And his argument was basically just that initially, value is ascribed to the users. People need to scale the platform, and then at some point that shift of surplus value goes to businesses because the platform needs to monetize. And then the death rattle for these platforms is, well, now the platform is going to exploit the businesses and it just leads to a complete degradation in the user experience because then everything's litter with ads. The whole purpose of you going there is to theoretically connect with community, and that's not happening anymore.

I think there's a lot of validity to that idea, and I think you're just talking about market forces. If you're trying to hit the numbers that Facebook has, which at this point is kind of the granddaddy of viable social platforms, I don't know, how do you hit those numbers without falling sway to the needs to monetize the platform and figure out how to generate revenue streams? The flip side of that is that if you're in a smaller community or platform, it's probably harder to get VC and demonstrate to somebody, if you're a startup, to get somebody to invest in your business because they're like, "Well, what's going to be the return," if you're capping out at, I don't know, how many users, 500,000? One million?

Blake Droesch:

Yeah. I don't know if social media as a model has really been around long enough to say that it can't ultimately sort of remain in that sweet spot where it's profitable and still has a good user experience. I think we obviously could just compare everything to the trajectory that Facebook and Meta has really taken with their social networks, and what we're seeing with Twitter is kind of just a joke, right? It's a last ditch effort at monetization for a platform that was already in tons of trouble.

But I think what we talked about at the top of the conversation, where it's moving toward this old model of just consuming entertainment, I think that that type of idea is monetizable and can remain attractive to consumers because there might be new iterations and new

companies might take the upper hand, but at the end of the day, what we're really starting to see now is just sort of a continuation of this old model of eyeballs and profiting off of them.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah, to me it feels like a product or service with an outdated name. So I mean, you had social networks and you had social media, then you had social entertainment, you had social audio with Clubhouse for a second, and so whether you want to call it influencer media at this point, consumption media, entertainment media, Blake, a term you just mentioned, it does seem similar to some other things.

The smartphone. People hardly use the phone part anymore, but we still call them smartphones. And I was looking at some other companies that have outdated names or other things that have outdated names. 7-Eleven. Many of them are instead open 24-7, not the seven to 11 where they got their name or telecoms giant AT&T stands for American Telephone and Telegraph. Definitely isn't using those much anymore. So it does seem like it's struggling with a bit of an identity crisis because it's stuck with this old-fashioned name and has since moved on from its original purpose.

That's what we've got time for for the story of the week. Time, of course, for the game of the week. Today's game, What is the Point?

I'll read out four stories and have contestants, Rahul, Stephanie, and Blake tell us what they think is main takeaway of the story. Okay answers get one point, good answers get two, and answers that give you the same feeling as literally anytime you are near a lake. No one's ever been near a lake and been like, "It was rubbish. I'll never do that again."

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Not if you're brought to a lake by a mafioso. Then you're-

Marcus Johnson:

Whoa. What stories do you have?

Stephanie Taglianetti:

You feel bad. What?

Marcus Johnson:

When...

Stephanie Taglianetti:

The Sopranos?

Marcus Johnson:

Okay, outside of...

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Come on.

Blake Droesch:

As long as you're not wearing concrete shoes.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Swimming with the fishes is a really popular expression.

Marcus Johnson:

No, I thought they drop you in the river. They drop you in a lake?

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't know that mafiosos discriminated against-

Marcus Johnson:

Absolutely.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

... Bodies of water.

Marcus Johnson:

They would never do that in a lake. No, lakes are too peaceful. They would never do that. A river? Perhaps. The ocean? Maybe. Answers that leave you with that lake feeling, as long as it's not for bad reasons, get you three points. 20 seconds to answer before you hear this.

Run long, technical foul, minus two points. Two texts gets you ejected. Most points wins, gets the last word. We start with Rahul. For round one, the streaming war's battle royal. Our very own senior forecasting writer, Ethan Cramer-Flood, just wrote a piece that includes a great interactive graphic that lays out who's winning the streaming wars in America by viewership, not subscribers. How many people are viewing the services, not our subscribed to them. So the graphic includes paid SVODs, free and supported streaming TV services, called FASTS for short, and vMVPDs, which is a heinous acronym, but it's also known as streaming TV services.

When you rank them by total viewers in the US, all of those different types of services, the top seven are SVODs, led by Netflix, Prime Video, and Hulu, each with about 120 to 170 million users. FASTs like the Roku channel, Tubi, and Pluto TV occupy eighth, ninth, and 10th spots, each with about 60 to 70 million. And then the streaming TV services like YouTube TV, Hulu with live TV and Sling our 15th, 16th, and 17th. They've got about six to 15 million a piece. But Rahul, the streaming wars battle royal, what's the point?

Rahul Chadha:

I mean the thing that jumped out to me immediately was that the writer described a chart that had 17 major platforms. 17 major platforms, and then went on to describe that there was maybe a half dozen other significant players that we didn't break out in our forecast. It's like consumers are faced with the overwhelming amount of choice. Anecdotally, I know there's information about all these streamers pulling back on their content creation because they're like, "Wait, is our business model viable? We've just been going for scale and maybe the profits aren't there."

And then even with the vMVPDs, which look the most like old school cable TV, are drawing comparatively small numbers. And I think that means either consumers don't understand the product or they're happy to hopscotch around individual streaming services as it suits them. So I think you're going to still see just high churn numbers and people signing up and canceling on whims.

Marcus Johnson:

Stephanie.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

So what stood out to me in this interactive graphic, which was awesome because you could flip through different views of what stats you're going to look at. So when you look at the total number of viewers, you see folks like Netflix, Prime, Hulu, and Disney at the top of the list. But then when you flip that and look at percentage change in growth, that tells a totally different story.

YouTube climbs to the top, Netflix and Prime and Hulu move all the way down to the bottom of that list. Netflix and Prime actually go into the negative for growth. So I think what's important here is for marketers that are strategizing for the future, it's especially important to understand not only the scale of audiences and viewers, but also prospects across all levels of services, especially in the mid-level and free streaming services.

Marcus Johnson:

Blake.

Blake Droesch:

Yeah, I had a similar takeaway, which is that the vMVPDs have the strongest prospects for growth because we hear so much about subscription fatigue for those premium streaming services, Disney, Netflix, Hulu, et cetera. But what is not included here is still the very substantial audience that has a cable subscription.

But as Rahul mentioned that the YouTube TV and Hulu and Fubo, those are all basically the same. You're getting the same thing as you're getting a cable subscription. So there's a ability for digital transformation to still sort of drive growth in those areas, which is really not that true for the premium subscriptions like Netflix and Hulu, which are all just battling it out, which seems like for the same allotment of content or trying to get eyeballs with investing a lot in new types of content, which is very expensive. So I think it's just one of those things where you see it at the bottom of the list, but actually that tends to be where the story is because that's where the opportunity is for growth.

Marcus Johnson:

Immediate technical foul. You didn't even need to go to the replay center. It was too obvious. Oh my god, Blake,

Blake Droesch:

Was that a little long?

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah, it was a little long. You could have taken some of that time to look up dinner party data, which I know you're doing during the show.

Blake Droesch:

I still got to do that.

Marcus Johnson:

Oh for crying out loud. Negative two for Blake, but he did get two points for the answer. So still on zero. We move to round two. Why can't Twitter and TikTok be easily replaced? Something called network effects, writes Bobby Allen of NPR. He says, "As most daily users are quick to point out, Twitter has become clunkier, glitchier and less relevant than it used to be. But nearly six months into Musk's control, no serious competitor has emerged, leaving some wondering what more it will take for everyone to leave for another social media site." But Stephanie, why Twitter and TikTok can't be easily replaced? What's the point?

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Okay, first of all, Twitter definitely does not need to be replaced in the first place. Its growth is falling off of a cliff, so just let it die. And also, maybe there's no need for a new Twitter with line blurring on social apps, the rise of LinkedIn, but that "network effect" that's carrying Twitter's lifeline, that's only going to work if you grow your network, and we all know that that's not happening for Twitter.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah. Twitter's growth, you mentioned. 59 million Twitter users in the US last year. We're expecting that to drop by 4 million this year to 55 and then drop by another 5 million next year to 50. So as Stephanie points out, that Twitter growth in the US and worldwide actually, it is falling. Blake.

Blake Droesch:

Yeah, I think we've been talking about the demise of all of these different social networks for one reason or another for many years, but the reality is that these platforms still have really,

really large user bases and on a platform like Twitter, even though the public sentiment around it has been fairly negative, there are still people who use the platform for a variety of reasons.

When a social network hits that sort of mass adoption, it's not to say like it's impervious of a decline, but it's going to take a very long time for that to happen. And it's not necessarily some alternative platform is going to come up and there's going to be a massive migration. I mean, that would be very, very unlikely to happen. But it doesn't mean that players in the tech space and advertisers don't need to be aware of these sort of long-term declines.

Marcus Johnson:

Rahul.

Rahul Chadha:

I mean, I completely dispute the premise of this article. I don't think network effects provide any kind of moat for any of these platforms. I think hardcore Twitter users are stuck in this weird echo chamber where they think Twitter is really important, but like you mentioned, there's a declining users. We expect fewer than 15% of people in the US to use Twitter next year. That's not a dominant platform.

And for TikTok, they're not really consuming content from their network, but content that the algorithm or we found out recently someone at TikTok who's "heating content" that they think users will like. So in that sense, again, it's like we mentioned earlier, it's not that different from any old school TV channel analyst trying to just program content that people will watch. So I don't think that the concept of the network effect is going to provide any kind of protective effect for either of these networks.

Marcus Johnson:

The halfway mark. Rahul with five, Stephanie with four, Blake behind with two. We move to round three. We start with Blake. Room for improvement in Blake's performance, but also in ad portrayals of multicultural audiences, notes our VP of Research Jennifer Pearson. She writes, "The reason uproar over Levi Strauss plans to use AI generated models rather than human ones to boost diversity in its ads is focusing attention on the depiction of underrepresented groups in promotions, raising concerns that AI could be used to convey a false impression of authentic inclusion."

Jenny points to some September research from the Collage Group showing 55% of Americans said their content with their representation in ads. But when split by race, 59% of white adults were satisfied with how ads portrayed them versus 53 for Hispanic, 49 for Black adults, and 53% for Asian people. But Blake, room for improvement in ad portrayals of multicultural audiences. What's the point?

Blake Droesch:

I think the advertising industry has long been guilty of embracing stereotypes based on demographics that they're trying to reach and also pandering to these audiences. And AI is just another addition in just the line of just really distasteful things that the advertising does in order to appear they're being inclusive.

I think the advertising industry is a really big source of employment for actors and models, and if you're just taking a shortcut to use AI in order to be inclusive, that has real world implications on people's livelihoods in the way that they're trying to make a living in this industry.

Marcus Johnson:

Rahul.

Rahul Chadha:

Yeah, I mean, I agree with Blake. I think there are really two issues. One is related to replacing human labor with AI, especially human labor that might be from marginalized or minority communities where getting the job is a bigger deal for them, and the other's just about representation in media.

And I noticed the piece conflates advertising with TV content, which in my mind are two different things. I mean, just as a person of color, I think representation is nice and should be table stakes for brands. But I'm also not going to run out and buy Oreos because they saw an Indian dude in an ad for them. I don't know.

Marcus Johnson:

Stephanie.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

I really loved this post by Jenny Pearson. She's basically talking about how minorities are unhappy with how they're being portrayed and brands are going to face backlash if they don't make an actual effort to showcase authentic people and voices. But using AI that has so many issues with perpetuating racial biases and is currently making a ton of errors in content creation, in advertising, I just think it's wildly irresponsible for where the tech is at right now.

Marcus Johnson:

That stat about 55% of Americans said they're content with their representation in ads. If you flip it, 45% of Americans, half, nearly, are not happy with how they're represented in ads. Seems like a problem.

Let's move to round two. We start with Rahul for double points... Round two? What the hell am I doing? Round four? God knows what's going on. Last round. Double points, last round. Round four is what it's sometimes called. We're starting with Rahul. He's ahead with seven points, Stephanie with six, and Blake with a rather dismal three. Blake, if you want to sit this last round out, I wouldn't...

Blake Droesch:

Should I just pack it in?

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Blake Droesch:

All right. I'm going to head out.

Marcus Johnson:

He's done.

Blake Droesch:

Thanks for having me.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Bye.

Marcus Johnson:

I say thank you to my guest, Blake. Thank you for being around.

Blake Droesch:

A pleasure to be here, Marcus. Everyone enjoy your weekend.

Marcus Johnson:

Round four, we're talking about the fight for the car screen. GM ditches, Apple CarPlay on electric vehicles as fight for your car screen intensifies. "The move to drop CarPlay, the app that lets drivers connect their iPhones to the car's display, highlights the battle that could be worth billions," writes Mike Colias of the Wall Street Journal.

GM is also saying goodbye to Android's alternative, Android Auto, in favor of another new software. However, GM is using Google's underlying tech for its new interface, so Android users will still see Google Maps and other familiar features. But Rahul, the fight for the car screen. What's the point?

Rahul Chadha:

I mean, if you're asking me if I think GM is going to come out with a piece of software that's better than what Google or Apple could come up with, the answer is no. I mean, consumers want ease of use and I think if you introduce these friction points, it's going to be a big enough problem that you might lose a sale if you're GM.

The flip side of that is that it's a battle over data and revenue, but bad experiences. And I think there's going to be a lot of them if GM follows through with this strategy. They're going to turn off consumers, and I think that it's not out of the realm of possibility they're going to lose sales because of it.

Marcus Johnson:

Stephanie.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

As a consumer, I'm just going to say it. Can we stop putting more stuff in our car screens? My Uber driver was literally watching a sports game on his center console while driving me from

the airport. I think we're at a place, and maybe GM will be the one to do it, we can dumb down the car consoles a little bit.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah. Shohei Ohtani can wait, folks. I know he is the talk of the baseball world, but he can wait. He's not that good. He probably is. Blake.

Blake Droesch:

Yeah, I would say that Apple probably has a better chance of making a really good automobile engine than GM does of making a decent piece of in-car technology. So I'll just leave it at that. But that is what-

Marcus Johnson:

Oh, there's more.

Blake Droesch:

It's a race for who can control the whole ecosystem, and if GM wants in, then we know that Apple's been speculating on encroaching on their turf. I don't think anyone's ever going to get 100% of that market and what they want, so collaboration really is the way forward. And I think they're going to shoot themselves on the foot if they refuse to do so.

Marcus Johnson:

Very nice, folks. End of the game. Count the points. Stephanie and Blake combined nearly had as many as Rahul, but Rahul has 13, Stephanie with eight, Blake with seven. He is this week's winner of the Game of the Week and also gets the championship belt, and, of course, the last word.

Rahul Chadha:

I am so ill prepared for this. I'm drawing a complete blank here.

Marcus Johnson:

Will you or will you not see the new Mario Brothers movie?

Rahul Chadha:

Oh.

Marcus Johnson:

And more importantly, what you think is the best Mario game to date?

Rahul Chadha:

Ooh. The answer to the-

Marcus Johnson:

There's only one right answer.

Rahul Chadha:

The answer to the first question is no, I'm going hardcore OG. John Leguizamo for life. The answer to the second question, that is-

Marcus Johnson:

That was a good one.

Rahul Chadha:

I think I'm going to go Super Mario Brothers three. Yeah.

Marcus Johnson:

Oh wow. Okay.

Rahul Chadha:

Taking it back.

Marcus Johnson:

I don't hate that answer, but the right answer of course, Stephanie and Blake, is?

Blake Driesch:

Mario Kart.

Marcus Johnson:

Mario Kart. Blake with come back. Well played.

Blake Droesch:

Do I win the Game of the Week?

Marcus Johnson:

No, absolutely not. You're so far behind. Doesn't matter how many points I give you. Stephanie, what did you say?

Stephanie Taglianetti:

I literally mumbled into my mic.

Marcus Johnson:

Oh, okay.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

I can't name a single one.

Marcus Johnson:

That's all we've got time for for the Game of the Week. Let's of course move to Dinner Party Data.

This is the part of the show where we tell you about the most interesting thing that we've learned. If you're Blake, in the last five minutes. If you're other people, in the last week. Well we start with Rahul because he crushed the competition. This week's Game of the Week. Rahul, what do you have for us?

Rahul Chadha:

Yeah, I stumbled across some data that was about the origin of the names of places in the US that were named after another place. I mean, there's no big surprise. Most of them come from Europe, so it's like about 72% of the names originate in Europe.

Marcus Johnson:

Wow.

Rahul Chadha:

England was by far the number one source of place names in the US with 284. So Marcus, you probably-

Marcus Johnson:

You're welcome.

Rahul Chadha:

... Travels across America, it probably feels like a little slice of home here and there. Germany was second with a distant 89. So England has more than three times the number that Germany does. And then Canada was a surprising number three, which I was just like, isn't everything in Canada named after some place in France or England? I don't know. So that was surprising.

So New York, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts, the top three states is measured by the highest number of towns named after foreign places, but Minnesota was fourth. And these names obviously reflect immigration patterns. So you'll see a cluster of Dutch names in the Hudson Valley in New York. British Isles is names are reflected in the northeast, and then you find a lot of Northern Europe names concentrated in the upper Midwest.

Marcus Johnson:

When you said most places come from European names, cities, towns, things like that, I thought you were going to talk about the states. Because it was the Smithsonian magazine saying half the states in the US come from Native American names originally. So I thought that's the direction you were going in, but that's fascinating.

Rahul Chadha:

Yeah, I think this is more cities and towns, kind of.

Marcus Johnson:

Cool. Very nice. Let's move to Stephanie. Give Blake a bit more time.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Keep digging around, Blake.

Blake Droesch:

There's got to be something.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

So in honor of Suzy's tomato farm, I have-

Marcus Johnson:

Oh, don't...

Stephanie Taglianetti:

... One tomato fact.

Marcus Johnson:

Moving on. Blake. you're up.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

A tomato fact for every tomato in her garden, which is about six, by the way.

Marcus Johnson:

So two.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

I have six facts, yeah.

Marcus Johnson:

Okay.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

And also we know that tomatoes are fruits, but they're only stacked up against vegetables and still classified in the statistics that I've pulled up as vegetable. So just bear with me here. They are one of the world's most consumed vegetable crops. 93% of American gardening households, like Suzy's, grow tomatoes.

Marcus Johnson:

Ugh, don't include her.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

It's the most popular vegetable in the US. They're the major dietary source of the antioxidant lycopene, which has been linked to health benefits such as reduced risk of heart disease and cancer. It's speculated that there's over 25,000 varieties of tomatoes and the average American eats around 24 pounds of tomatoes each year.

Rahul Chadha:

Tomatoes are one of those things where I'm like, is it a vegetable or a fruit? I feel like there was so much conflicting information about that out there. And then also, I don't even know if these are just social constructs from, I don't know, some biologist perspective. There is no difference between a vegetable and a fruit.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

I think it's about the seeds, which is why avocados are in the same quandary.

Marcus Johnson:

Wasn't it one of those things where it was a vegetable for, I don't know, most of our lives, and then at some point someone went, "No, it's a fruit," and everyone just started to be like, "All right."

Stephanie Taglianetti:

That's actually a really great synopsis of how it went down, Marcus.

Blake Droesch:

That's kind of the same debate over, is Pluto a planet? It was a planet when I was a kid, then it wasn't. I feel like now it is again.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah, exactly. It's not a planet anymore. No. Scratch that.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Downgraded to a star.

Marcus Johnson:

For pictures of Suzy's supposed tomato estate, you can head to our Instagram, which Victoria-

Stephanie Taglianetti:

I'm not going to lie, I did have to squint to find-

Marcus Johnson:

Thank you.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

... Any of the tomatoes in that garden.

Marcus Johnson:

They're nonexistent. You can't see things that are invisible. Victoria, what's our Instagram?

Victoria:

Behindthenumbers_podcast.

Marcus Johnson:

There it is. Thanks, V. Victoria, who is known on the show for her wealth of knowledge about all things food, her and Stewart, that's all they talk about in our team meetings. We get nothing achieved. But Victoria-

Victoria:

A lot achieved. We can fit more than one topic in our meetings. Let's just get that straight.

Marcus Johnson:

That's true. What's the best thing that you can do with a tomato cooking-wise? Where do you think it's best used?

Victoria:

That depends. Where are you getting your tomato?

Marcus Johnson:

Oh. Oh, see?

Victoria:

If it's off the vine...

Marcus Johnson:

These are the questions.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Suzy's vines.

Victoria:

Suzy's vine? You do a little bit of balsamic.

Marcus Johnson:

Not much. Small packet of ketchup.

Victoria:

Toss the cherry tomato in your salad.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Step one, find them.

Marcus Johnson:

It's a game.

Victoria:

Suzy, I believe in you. If you're listening to this, I believe in your tomato garden.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Oh, she's going to listen.

Blake Droesch:

If you've got those little mozzarella balls-

Victoria:

That's where I was going.

Blake Droesch:

A little toothpick, one of Suzy's tomatoes.

Victoria:

Little Caprese bites.

Blake Droesch:

You got about four of those. Yeah. Little bites.

Victoria:

Delicious.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Little Caprese stick. Yeah. Put some basil, little-

Victoria:

Balsamic on.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

...Balsamic drizzle. Yeah.

Victoria:

Stephanie knows. She's got the Italian last name.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

I know. I host. I'm Italian.

Marcus Johnson:

Very nice. Very nice. Blake. You're up, mate.

Blake Droesch:

So I looked up some data about how... I'm not going to lie, I didn't look up any data. Apparently I just went on YouGov America, which is a great website because they do ask a lot of questions about cultural issues, which I find endlessly fascinating when it comes to different data sources. And this one asked about how often Americans rewatch TV shows. So I'm a big TV show rewatcher. Find there's a lot of comfort in nostalgia. It's very relaxing.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Yeah.

Blake Droesch:

And apparently I'm not alone. So 16% of Americans said that they rewatch episodes of TV that they've already seen on a daily basis. And on top of that, 35% said that they rewatched TV shows they've already seen once or a few times a week, which I actually found interesting is that 18 to 29 year olds were the most likely to rewatch television shows that they've already seen.

And it actually goes in descending. The older the generations, the least likely they are. Which kind of is counterintuitive because the whole idea of syndicated sitcoms has kind of fallen out of favor, but I think this idea of streaming and binge-watching has really just taken its place. So I think that sort of ties it all together and goes back to the original topic of this podcast was just, it's just entertainment, people. It's taking on different forms and different mediums, but at the end of the day, people are just doing the same thing.

Rahul Chadha:

Yeah, I feel like watching shows that you've seen already, it's like the equivalent of comfort food. It's like a bunch of empty calories, but it's infinitely comforting.

Marcus Johnson:

Thanks, Blake. Of all the things you could have found, there goes tomorrow's Another News down the drain.

Blake Droesch:

Was that what you were going for?

Marcus Johnson:

Yes. Me and Daniel were going to talk about this tomorrow.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Nice.

Blake Droesch:

Snaked. That's what I get.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Nice, Blake.

Blake Droesch:

Next time, maybe judge me a little bit more favorably and I won't snake you.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

You got to keep Marcus on his toes.

Marcus Johnson:

Unbelievable. Great. Two hours worth of... It wasn't two hours.

Rahul Chadha:

Does anybody have a go-to old TV show they like to watch?

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Oh yeah, the Office. For sure.

Marcus Johnson:

It's okay-

Rahul Chadha:

The Office? Okay.

Marcus Johnson:

The English Office? Yeah?

Rahul Chadha:

It's like six episodes. You can't rewatch the English office.

Marcus Johnson:

Okay.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

No, you can watch it over and over and over and over and over again. So much joy.

Marcus Johnson:

It's so good. Rahul?

Rahul Chadha:

Oh, I was about to describe it as a guilty pleasure, but I feel no guilt. I've been rewatching Doogie Houser, MD, which I'm sure is probably way older than anybody else on this call to have watched it originally on its air date.

But I was like, it holds up pretty well, I think, in terms of serious themes that it addresses. And I'm super into Doogie's nineties surf culture inflected wardrobe. It's like neon green body glove T-shirts with some pretty ill designs on it and stuff. So a little sartorial inspiration to boot.

Marcus Johnson:

I wish they'd asked what is the most re-watched show because they had by genre, which was comedy and drama, but I bet Friends is responsible for like 70%.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

I would bet that.

Rahul Chadha:

Yeah.

Marcus Johnson:

And it's interesting because it said it wasn't just because it's on in the background, it's most accessible. That was way down the list in terms of why people re-watch. So it's not just about that it's on the background. I thought it was interesting, six out of 10 Americans rewatch a TV show, enjoy it the same amount of time. 19% said they enjoy it more, 13%, so they enjoy it less. So people are getting a similar or higher value of enjoyment the second time round, which is cool. All right, thanks for that, Blake.

Blake Droesch:

Anytime.

Marcus Johnson:

All right, Danny, me and you got to find something else to talk about. Cheers, Blake.

Okay, so I've got one for you real quick. Where Americans have moved in the last 10 years. So this data is from 2010 to 2020, comes from the US Census and Brookings, and it's written up in a Visual Capitalist piece by Iman Ghosh. So bear that in mind. It's from 2010 to 2020.

Obviously a lot has happened since then, but during that time, I've got five facts for you. Number 1, 331 million people in America makes it the third most populated country in the world behind, of course, China and India. It's been number three since the late 1800s.

Number two, America added 22 million folks to its population, 2010 to 2020. That's one new Florida, which is the third most populated state in the country. Number three, nearly two thirds of the country live in the Sunbelt region of the US. That is, if you split America in two halves, the top half and the bottom half, the Sunbelt is pretty much the bottom half, or almost. So two thirds live in that area. Number four, which states grew or shrank the most? Percentage wise, Utah grew the most. 18%, and percentage wise, West Virginia shrank the most. It shrank by 3%.

In terms of total number of people, Texas added 4 million people. West Virginia lost. West Virginia again, in terms of total number, lost 60,000 people from its population. And number five, by percentage growth, the top five were, as I mentioned already, Utah, and then it goes Idaho, Texas, North Dakota and Nevada. The bottom five were West Virginia, Mississippi, Illinois, which all shrank. And then Connecticut and Michigan, which were pretty much flat. They rounded out the bottom five in terms of population growth. That's where people have been going and that data is horribly out date and not relevant at all because now everyone went everywhere else soon as 2020 hit. So ignore everything I just said.

That's all we've got time for this episode. Thank you so much to my guests, thank you to Blake.

Blake Droesch:

Thanks for having me.

Marcus Johnson:

Thank you to Stephanie.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Thank you, Marcus.

Marcus Johnson:

And of course, thank you to Rahul.

Rahul Chadha:

Cheers. Thank you, Marcus.

Marcus Johnson:

This week's winner of the Game of the Week. Thank you to Victoria who edits the show and gives us solid advice on what you can do with tomatoes in the kitchen. Thank you James, who copyrights the show and Stuart who runs the team. Thanks to everyone listening in. You can say hi by sending us a message on Instagram at [behindthenumbers_podcast](#). We read them all because we typically get one a year, so it's really not too much trouble. We'll see you guys on Monday, hopefully, for the Behind the Numbers Daily, an eMarketer podcast made possible by Cint. Happy weekends.