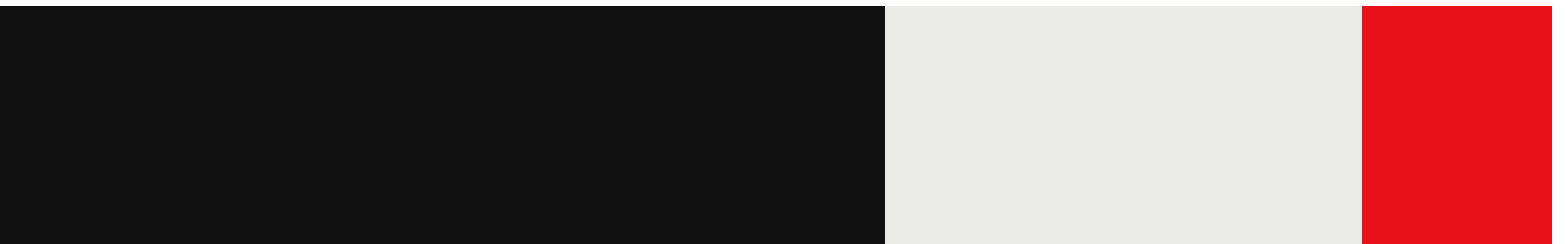


# The Weekly Listen: Venu Sports (the Disney, Fox, and Warner venture) gets blocked, how to sell folks on AI, and more

Audio



On today's podcast episode, we discuss what happens next now that sports-focused streaming service Venu Sports has been blocked, how to get customers onboard with your AI-infused products and services, how the streaming bundle is changing, the US considering a breakup of Google to address its search monopoly, the most sort after plane seats, and more. Tune in to the discussion with host Marcus Johnson, director of reports editing Rahul Chadha and analysts Ross Benes and Max Willens.

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Episode Transcript:

Marcus Johnson:

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EMARKETER podcast. This is the Friday show, that really does think that tackle golf should be a thing. Jeremy Goldman, who is our briefings guy, he brought it up the other day. I don't know why, but I haven't stopped thinking about it. I'd watched that.

Ross Benes:

And it's better than regular golf.

Marcus Johnson:

There you go. That's all it needs. Exactly. Not difficult. It's a low bar. Anyway, I'm Marcus. In today's show, a judge says, "No," to Venue Sports, how best to get customers on board with your AI infused products and services. What will the streaming bundle look like going forwards? Will Google get broken up to address its search monopoly and what the most sought after seats on an airplane? Join me for this episode. We have three people, let's meet them. We start with our senior analyst who covers everything digital advertising and media. He's based in Philly, it's Max Willens.

Max Willens:

Yo.

Marcus Johnson:

Hey fella, someone else who covers what Max covers as well. Also another senior analyst, but based just north of New York City. It's Ross Benes.

Ross Benes:

Hey Marcus.

Marcus Johnson:

Hey Chap. And we end with our director of reports editing. He is down in Maryland now he is called Rahul Chadha.

Rahul Chadha:

Hey Marcus. Thanks for having me.

Marcus Johnson:

Hey buddy. Of course. All right folks, what do we have in store? The story of the week. We'll talk about Venue Sports and what's going on there. We then move to the game of the week, super-duper game, and we end with some trivia. That's dinner party data. Let's get right to it. We start of course with the story of the week.

So a judge has barred Disney, Warner and Fox from launching Venue Sports. This was the title of the article written by Brian Steinberg of Variety, but something also that Ross, you sent me, because we were talking about it quite recently. U.S. District Judge Margaret Garnett said that the new sports streaming joint venture would substantially lessen competition, essentially killing rival FuboTV. She was the one who was presiding over the case Venue Sports, which was expected to launch in late August, ahead of this year's NFL season was priced at \$43 a month, would've carried all the major U.S. across a number of popular channels like ESPN, FS1, TNT and others. Venue's three partners said they plan to appeal, so they plan the service and then some folks like FuboTV said, "Hang on a second. That seems like it's going to be anti-competitive." The Judge Garnett has agreed with them, at least for now.

Ross, you predicted this correctly. We talked in a predictions episode I think a month or two ago. One of your predictions was that this won't get out the door by the time the NFL season starts, which is September 7th, I think, or the first week of September at least. What's your take on the ruling and what happened?

Ross Benes:

Okay, so there was a precedent in the ruling because back in the eighties the major movie studios were upset at HBO and they banded together to try to create this TV network that would syndicate all their movies called Premier, and a judge blocked it from happening saying that it was anti-competitive for all the studios to work together to fight against the distributor. So this is kind of that the same sort of thing with the TV networks banding together so that they could work against the VMVPDs or the MVPDs and have their own distribution.

Now there's other reasons that I just didn't think it would launch in time for football season. They haven't done a lot of marketing. They had just released a price. You couldn't even sign up for it on their website. Most consumers weren't aware of it, and if you miss the entire football season, your first year is going to be pretty flat given that this service doesn't have regional sports network. So if you're a big baseball fan or a big NBA fan of particular teams, you are only going to get those games that are on national television, which is few and far in between.

So it seemed like it would appeal most to football because those games are the ones that are most likely to be nationally televised, but now they're for sure going to miss football season or at least a good chunk of it due to the preliminary injunction. So it puts them in a really tough bind.

Max Willens:

Yeah. Yeah, go on please. I was just going to say I also, I think everything that Ross said is correct, but as I thought ahead of this episode about possible things that Venue could do to sort of get itself back into the court's good graces, I really struggled and not mainly because of the position that they have put themselves in by potentially crowding out Fubo or other competitors, but also because any kind of block they pull out of this Jenga Tower is going to essentially force it to collapse or look pretty shabby as a consumer proposition.

So even though you add up all those players, you're still left with an incomplete serving of sports. So the NFL, as Ross points out, is going to be a critical piece to this, but they don't at the moment have Paramount or CBS in play, which means no CBS games. It also means they don't have Sunday night football, which belongs to NBC, Universal and Comcast, and then later in the year when you get into the NBA, they're not going to have the games of two of the three, well I guess that's next year, but they're going to struggle to adequately show that off in the coming years as well.

And then you add in really the root problem for a Venue as a product, which is just that it's total addressable market is really actually not that big. So the way that I look at it is that this is a service that is essentially aimed at hardcore sports fans and based on market research that's been done or consumer research that's been done, you're really talking about a smallish number of people. So there was research done in 2023 by Monmouth University and they asked Americans to describe the level of their sports fandom and only about 21% of them describe themselves as avid sports fans. If you assume that 20 or half of those people are older folks that maybe already have cable subscriptions that are content with them and loathe to give them up, you're basically talking about an addressable market of about 55 million people, and that's a pretty tough starting point for any consumer proposition, especially one that might potentially have to give some of its most attractive offerings back to satisfy the concerns that Judge Garnett has.

Marcus Johnson:

On the size of the audience. So we estimate that half of Americans are live sports viewers. However, when you look at digital live sports viewers, that number goes from 50% basically to about 31%, so it comes down considerably. Then you're looking at the people who would be willing to pay for a service like this. There was a recent Horowitz research survey of sports viewers, which found over 40% of them were likely to subscribe to Venue Sports at a price point that's lower than what they were going to put this out at.

They were going to put this out at 43. 40% of people said that they would sign up if it was 35 to 40. That did jump up to half of people when you ask the under 50-year olds. So this service having broader appeal amongst the younger folks. Part of the anti-competitive piece of this, the price, I guess the plan here was to undercut on price and up the market share because it was 43 a month, which is about half the price of Fubo's cheapest subscription tier, which is 80 a month and YouTube TV is for 73 a month.

I'm surprised though that they didn't do the kind of monopoly calculations here because when city analysts estimated Venue Sports will encompass about 55% of US sports rights, that seems like an issue right off the bat. The problem is a lot of rights. The problem is, to Max, to your point, it's still fragmented. There's still 45% of the rights which you don't have and you're going to have to try and piece together if you want a complete picture of sports, if you want to be able to watch the things that you want to watch, do you think that this ends up getting remade and comes back with a vengeance at some point this season or next summer or you think it's done now?

Ross Benes:

So they'll appeal and if they can win that appeal, it will come back. I doubt it'll come back with a vengeance though because they have a long way to climb to get consumer awareness up to speed and they're going to miss probably their most valuable season. But if they lose that appeal, I don't think it's worth it for these three companies to continue to put all this time and resources and just executive expenditure on what doesn't seem like it'll move the needle a whole lot for them. I think it's got better faith than Quibi, per se, but I don't expect this to be as revolutionary as it was touted when the announcement came about this.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah, not the biggest compliment in the world. Max, what do you think? Daniel Konstantinovich who writes through our briefing, made a good point. He was saying, "The

delay could cause it to significantly lose out on customers making subscription decisions before the start of the NFL season or the NBA season for that matter." And so it is hard to start this midway through the season. People have already paid for things and the further through the season you get the less that they have to watch. So maybe you think about a next summer launch potentially. Is this dead or is this coming back maybe?

Max Willens:

Yeah, I'm inclined to say that if they don't win an appeal and they are forced to essentially start messing with the offering itself, I think that the product is kind of DOA for a lot of the reasons that I just laid out, but especially I think just to highlight something that you and Ross both touched on too, which is just that I think a big piece here is that if you're really trying to market this as something that's going to really satiate all of your sports watching desires, the fact that it doesn't have either RSNs or a lot of college coverage is I think a huge, huge problem. So I know that you can watch some college conferences thanks to ESPN.

Ross Benes:

But it wouldn't have Peacock and it wouldn't have some of the other regional nets and-

Max Willens:

That's right.

Ross Benes:

It wouldn't have, well, I'd have to look. I don't think it has the CWS college football now.

Max Willens:

That's right.

Ross Benes:

Although CW is half owned by Warner, but half owned by Paramount. I'd have to look at that. Yeah, I think there's some stuff that these companies have that it won't even... There's ESPN+ and there's BTN+ or B1G+ whatever we want to call it, that have ancillary sports. If you want to watch a lot of college soccer, that's not really on linear TV, that's on BTN+ same with ESPN+. I don't think that's going to be on here even though those companies are involved because it is just the linear networks. If it's on linear TV by these companies, it's in Venue. But



these companies, especially ESPN, have a lot of digital sports that isn't on the TV network and I don't get the sense that's on here. You'd have to subscribe separately to ESPN+, even though ESPN is one-third of this thing.

Max Willens:

It's very dangerous to market something and I guess we don't know that this is how it's going to be marketed because they have yet to start publicizing it. But I'm a little unclear on what the value proposition is because it doesn't look like they're going to get away with being able to say, "All of the sports are on Venue," and I don't know that being able to say, "Watch some sports for over \$40 a month," is going to get people flocking to their service, and so it seemed like a rickety proposition as is, but if they wind up having to weaken it or dilute it in any way, I just think it's going to be a really tough road for them.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah, I'm curious to see what emerges from this. It might not be these three players with this particular offering, but I do think there's a market for people who just want digital cable. They didn't mind cable before. They paid a lot for it, sure. There's a lot of things they didn't watch, but it's easier for a lot of folks, especially older, the folks to just say, "Look, what's the thing I had before? How can I get that in streaming version?" The price is right and there's enough content there. I think there is a market for this.

I also didn't realize that in addition to sports content subscribers get access to non-sports shows. So things like the Simpsons and the Bachelor that are shown on the various companies networks, ABC, Fox, TNT, I think maybe that's how you position it. It's kind of a mini digital cable. However, you don't get all the stuff you used to get with cable. You still have to pick and choose things to create the right service for you. Lots to work out. We'll keep an eye on it, but that's what we've got time for the story of the week. Let's move now to a game. We call it the Super Duper Game.

How does it work? Three rounds today we have fill in the blank, the random scale and fortune-teller. The better the answers, the more points you get. Let's start with Max for round one of playing fill in the blank where folks do that. How to sell customers on AI is the topic. Google, Apple, Levi's and others have missed the mark on selling the benefits of AI notes. Trishla Ostwal of Adweek, she cites Gartner VP and analyst, Nicole Green, who says, "Many of the ads that are receiving backlash are showcasing a future that many people fear," from

Google's Olympic. Dear Sydney ad that sees a father use AI to help his daughter write what was supposed to be a heartfelt fan letter to Apple, trying to literally crush various creative tools into an iPad to Levi's using AI-generated models who are black, indigenous and people of color. Now the fill in the blank, Max, the way to get customers on board with your AI infused products and services is blank.

Max Willens:

You sell it as a way to get ahead, not as a way to build relationships. I think the reason that people killed Google over its Olympics ad is because they saw it as people essentially sloughing off what could have been a really sweet and tender bonding moment onto a piece of technology, which I think people are generally pretty down on as a concept. Basically, the reason that I think ChatGPT has gained any ground at all is because it's a way to sort of take stuff you don't want to do off your plate. So kids love it because they can make ChatGPT do their homework for them, people in the office like ChatGPT because it does a lot of really tedious tasks quite well.

And so if you lean into that and keep it very, very simple and very, very small, rather than saying this is going to eat the entire creative industry the way that Apple tried to frame it, then you've got something. But if you try to make it about something that takes care of messy, inconvenient parts of relationship building or something that is capital T, capital F, The Future, then you're in big trouble.

Ross Benes:

I saw someone online saying, "Right now, Gen AI, we're often talking about how it can make art for you, it could do your writing, it could make the picture so you could have more time to work, but people don't want to work." You want AI to do your work so you could have more time to write and draw pictures. Those are the things that are fulfilling in life, not work.

Marcus Johnson:

Is that your answer, Ross? It's a good one.

Ross Benes:

Sure, why not?

Marcus Johnson:

Okay, good. Rahul?

Rahul Chadha:

Yeah, I think I'm a huge AI skeptic. I think the best way to sell people on AI is to pay them to use it. Honestly, I can never think of a good reason for, especially consumers, I think a lot of the practical applications for AI exist in sort of business frameworks where they're creating efficiencies and effectively eliminating human jobs from the equation. I think that part of it carries over the way consumers consider AI technologies. They feel a lot of fear and unease around the use of these tools, and I think you see that reflected in the reactions that people had to these ads and some campaigns, I think there's one of Levi's using AI created models. You're taking the human out of the equation and it's the very definition of dehumanising, and I think a lot of consumers at least are not going to go for it. They're going to have a lot of trepidation about that idea.

Marcus Johnson:

A lot of these ads were shockingly tone-deaf. Jeremy Goldman, who I mentioned before, writes up in an article for our briefing saying basically, "Don't go the dystopian sci-fi route and you should be okay. You'll be better off." So this chart is a study from a test showing that even though more creative ads was the third-greatest potential benefit to brands using AI tech, it's safe to say that they don't want brands to highlight, as we've said, their fears that AI could replace meaningful humans. Sorry, meaningful human connection and creativity. Let's move to round two.

Ross Benes:

One other thing that drives me crazy with AI ads, I saw one for Google the other day, it was on a streaming show I was watching, and it was all about, "Now with AI, you could have all these restaurants and places pop up when you search for them." You could already do that. That's not AI. You're just saying it... What am I going to say? "Oh, I could drive a car soon if I use AI." People have been doing that for 250 years, so not 250 years, but a long time. So there's a lot of things that Google and these other tech companies have already been doing for years and now they just call it AI. You could search for a restaurant on Google Maps 10 years ago. You didn't need a new LLM.

Marcus Johnson:

That's right. That's part of the problem I spoke with this about with our tech analysts, Gajo and Jacob before, which is I think it would help consumers to have some kind of a... Same way you have with driverless cars, you have the six levels of driverless cars, zero is none, five is it drives itself completely, and then you have other stuff in between like lane assist and all the rest of it. I think with AI it would help to have some kind of scale of how much AI is in this. Is it very little? Does it help me also complete an email, or is it doing the thinking for me with kind of AGI and or sentient AI at some point? Hopefully not. So yeah, I think it's a good point. It's easy to say AI, but how much AI is in it?

Round two, let's start with Ross and we've got the random scale for this round where folks have to tell me the chances of something happening using the random scale. What the streaming bundle will end up looking like is what we're talking about. DoorDash is teaming up with Max to enhance the value streaming service to enhance the value of DoorDash membership, right? So our retail briefings analyst, Rachel Wolf, she points out that the streaming subscriptions are quickly becoming a must have for delivery memberships as they try to attract customers and differentiate themselves from competitors. For example, Instacart is working with Peacock, Walmart has Paramount+, and Amazon of course has its own prime video service. The question is what will the streaming bundle look like? Your possible choices are, first one, mini prime bundles, so kind of a Max plus DoorDash plus other things, or a new digital cable bundle of just streaming services, or this idea I just thought of, which we're going to come up with Ross, which one?

Ross Benes:

I think it's more likely to see the telecom bundles and then streaming services bundling with each other. We already to see some of that. So like the Max Disney thing, the thing that Xfinity Comcast has with Netflix and Max, I think that's more the streaming bundle of the future. These things that you see with Instacart and Walmart+ they're nice to have little promotions, but they're not driving tons of subs. Ever since Paramount announced that with Walmart that there's still number six or seven in terms of usage, it doesn't really move the needle that much.

Marcus Johnson:

Rahul?

Rahul Chadha:

Yeah, I agree. It makes more sense to me that the type of bundling that you'll see that will drive a lot of customer acquisition is going to be something that resembles more cable. So it's because that's what people are familiar with, they're comfortable with it, they understand the concept, so it'll be a bundling of streaming type services. I do think that it looks to me like entities like DoorDash or e-Commerce subscription services are using these as a free value add for their existing users to kind of prevent churn. I think you had to sign up for an annual membership with DoorDash to get this Max benefit. So from that perspective, it kind of makes sense to me. People are going to kind of stick with a e-commerce subscription services they have because they use it every month to buy toilet paper or whatever, and if "Hey, you're throwing in Hulu for free. Yeah, I'll take it."

Marcus Johnson:

Max?

Max Willens:

Yeah, I think that the future we're looking at is more of an everything bundle, which you can see Amazon sort of in the middle of assembling already with Prime, so you can get Grubhub+ with your Prime membership. Prime Video offers a steadily growing bundle of live sports television, movies. I would be willing to bet that when Zoox launches, it's a self-driving taxi unit that Prime members will get at minimum cheaper rides, maybe even free ones once in a while. You already get discounts on groceries at Whole Foods. I realized that not many companies can launch an everything bundle, but there are a handful that are big and powerful enough that they're going to try and I think that that's what we're staring down the barrel at.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah, interesting. I was curious, I saw DoorDash, it's not a service I use, I've seen the ads around, but I was thinking, how big is this? How big of a deal is this? 12% of Americans subscribe to DoorDash's Dash Pass membership, and this chart you see, which is a June study we did with BizRate Insight shows that DoorDash is a larger paid membership program than Best Buy, Instacart+ or Uber One and about half as big as Walmart+ in terms of people who say that they pay for it, so it's not small. Yeah. Curious to see what other services get added to some of these bundles to see if they can entice folks.

Let's move to our final round, round three. We'll start with Rahul for this one. It's Fortune Teller where we predict the future. We're talking about the US and the fact that they are said to

consider a breakup of Google to address its search monopoly.

This is a piece from David McCabe and Nico Grant of the New York Times. Google was recently found to have violated antitrust law by illegally maintaining a search monopoly in large part because it paid device makers, like Apple, billions of dollars to be the default search app. Discussions over how to fix those violations are underway. The judge overseeing the case has asked the DOJ and Google to come up with a process for determining a resolution by September 4th and has scheduled a hearing on September 6th to discuss what happens next. Playing Fortune Teller, Rahul, what do you think ends up happening to Google?

Rahul Chadha:

I don't know if this is the most likely outcome, but as a layperson, the one that makes the most sense to me is to limit Google's ability to pay traffic acquisition cost payments to entities like Apple and Samsung to be the default search engine on those phones, or even the Firefox browser gets, I think most of its money from getting a payout from Google for making that the default search engine. I think there is a world I think that nobody's experienced where you turn on your phone and you select from a choice of search engines that includes Google, but also maybe competitors in terms of limiting its monopoly on search. To me, that seems like maybe the most effective, lowest hurdle for regulators to hit. Just based on what happened with Microsoft breaking up Google, I don't know how realistic that is.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah, I'm glad you're not a real fortune-teller because if I sat down, you start with, I don't know if this is the most likely outcome, I'd probably leave, but it's a good answer. Who have we got next? Max?

Max Willens:

I'm with Rahul in that I don't think that breaking Google into pieces is a pragmatic way to deal with what's happened. I think realistically it's possible that the DOJ will essentially push for what Rahul has suggested, which is essentially barring Google from entering into revenue sharing agreements and default agreements with things like Apple and Samsung. And because a lot of the proposals that have been floated by people like DuckDuckGo just feel kind of crazy to me. Like the notion that Google would be forced to share the power and data that its search engine has with rivals, or that the government would set up a kind of independent

regulatory body that would monitor how Google uses its information and share it with other people.

That just doesn't feel very realistic to me. And so I think that the most realistic, but maybe still somewhat unsatisfying answer, is that Google will basically just be barred from entering into these agreements, which I think in the long run could wind up making Google stronger anyway because it will spare them the expense of having to send this cash to rivals like Apple. But consumers who have gotten used to Google will essentially just go through the 2, 3, 4, 5 step process of making Google their default search engine, whether they're using Safari or Firefox or whatever the default browser is inside of Apple's phones, or excuse me, Samsung's phones.

Marcus Johnson:

Or trying something different, realizing that they don't like it because it's not similar to what they've been doing for the last 20, 30 years. And going back to Google. Ross, what've you got?

Ross Benes:

Well, I'm going to go in a different direction than these guys and say they're going to go full Ma Bell and break it all up. It's going to be like Ashley Simpson, all the pieces, pieces, pieces of Google and stuff like YouTube could be its own thing. And then you could have Display and Video 360 could be its own thing. Google Adx could be its own thing because a lot of these systems that we now associate with Google weren't created by Google. They were acquired over the years, like double click and YouTube, so they don't have to go together. We're just used to them going together. And of course that would force advertisers to rethink all sorts of their planning and campaign strategy because they are so used to operating on these systems. But I think that's a more exciting route even if it's less plausible.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah, interesting takes. All right gents, we look at the scores for a winner, haven't really been keeping the score, but let's say Rahul is this week's winner of the game of the week. Congratulations to you. You get the championship belt.

Rahul Chadha:

Thank you very much.

Marcus Johnson:

And the last word.

Rahul Chadha:

Oh, I was unprepared for this part.

Marcus Johnson:

We have to cut this out. No one wants to do it and I force it on people.

Rahul Chadha:

Yeah.

Marcus Johnson:

You're still here though, Rahul, so you've got to come up with something.

Rahul Chadha:

I'm totally blanking. I don't know.

Marcus Johnson:

Last film you watched, go.

Rahul Chadha:

Oh, the last film I watched. That was a long time ago, man.

Marcus Johnson:

How long ago based on what you-

Rahul Chadha:

Pre-child, I feel like I'm not able to watch content-

Marcus Johnson:

Rahul was like, Toy Story One.

Rahul Chadha:



[inaudible 00:28:34] Anymore. I have been rewatching The Boys, which is...

Marcus Johnson:

Is this the superhero thing?

Rahul Chadha:

Yeah, that's right.

Marcus Johnson:

Victoria must be losing her mind right now. She's been trying to get me to watch this for... Well, not too long but... Right, V, big fan?

Victoria Grace:

I was going to say, I've only brought it up once because I think you'd like it. I'm a big fan. I was a late adopter of The Boys and now I'm entrenched. So good. So gross. So inappropriate, but so entertaining.

Marcus Johnson:

I probably won't watch it. All right, let's move to our final segment of the day. It's dinner party data. This is the part of the show where we tell you about the most interesting thing we've learned this week. We start with Rahul.

Rahul Chadha:

Yeah. So I came across some interesting information, to me at least, about Michelin starred restaurants. So Tokyo actually has more Michelin starred restaurants than any other city in the world with 180. Number two was Paris, but Japanese cities held three of the top four spots. The other two Japanese cities are Kyoto and Osaka. New York City actually came in seventh place, which was surprising to me, given how snobby "self-appointed" foodies are in New York City and the APAC region dominated the list. So they had 10 of the top 15 starred cities were in the APAC region, which also was surprising to me.

Marcus Johnson:

You been before? Not to the APAC region [inaudible 00:30:03]

Rahul Chadha:

No, I don't think I can afford one. I feel I've read that there's maybe a noodle stand in Singapore or something like that, that's Michelin starred, I feel like that's probably more my speed in terms of affordability and vibe.

Marcus Johnson:

Has anyone been to a Michelin star restaurant?

Ross Benes:

No.

Victoria Grace:

I have.

Ross Benes:

[inaudible 00:30:20].

Max Willens:

We're not making that money.

Ross Benes:

A few miles from my house and I can walk my dogs in their property. That's about as close as I get.

Marcus Johnson:

You said you have, V?

Victoria Grace:

I have.

Marcus Johnson:

Oh, where and how was it?

Victoria Grace:

In San Francisco. And it was incredible and I think about the fish that I was served probably once a week and that was over two years ago.

Marcus Johnson:

That's too often. All right, let's go Max.

Max Willens:

All the media outlets of the day are sort of jockeying to stamp different songs as the Song of the Summer, but because of how atomized and disparate our culture has gotten, there is no actual consensus about what the Song of the Summer is. So real quick, does anybody have any guesses for what the Song of the Summer is?

Rahul Chadha:

Some Charlie XCX song? I don't know.

Marcus Johnson:

That's a good guess.

Max Willens:

Von Dutch.

Marcus Johnson:

Chappell Roan. Okay, it's all gone.

Max Willens:

Von Dutch by Charlie XCX did make one of Rolling Stones lists, Chappell Roan's Hot to Go made a couple, Tinashe's Nasty was declared Song of the Summer by Tik-Tok, which as of last summer is in the Song of the Summer declaration business. Billboard decided that Post Malone's I had some Help is actually the Song of the Summer. What's interesting about this is how much kind of overlap there isn't. So for example, Billboard has a Song of the Summer chart and Nasty is not on the chart at all, which just shows how much splintering there is within music as a cultural industry.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah, interesting. I've heard none of those songs. [inaudible 00:32:13] surprised to know. Not a word V, not a word. Ross?

Ross Benes:

So I was curious, how often is it common for toddlers to get sick? Because my toddlers sick all the time, including right now. And according to the Children's Hospital of Orange County, toddlers can have eight to 12 colds, respiratory infections or stomach bugs a year. And that's normal. And the Mayo Clinic says they can have a dozen colds a year and still be normal. And I've got to say a dozen doesn't sound so bad. I think we're aiming for closer to two dozen by the end of this year.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah, I can just picture you in that band like, "It's always sick. Is this normal?" How often? Once a month, fair enough. Checks out.

Ross Benes:

Yeah, you go in some weird rabbit holes looking for this stuff.

Marcus Johnson:

It does feel like it's often. All right, you're telling me man, I've got one for you real quick. And I don't have kids but they seem sick every time I'm around them.

Ross Benes:

[inaudible 00:33:17] them.

Marcus Johnson:

[inaudible 00:33:17] I got one for you real quick. What are the most sought-after plane seats? So Rachel Chang of Condé Nast Traveler notes that Austin-based travel research company Upgrade Points surveyed over 3000 US passengers in nearly every state this summer, asking them to identify their top seat section on a Boeing 737, 800 airplane seat map, which is a single aisle and it has a two and two configuration in first class and a three and three configuration in economy. They found the most popular seat on the plane. So no single seat was overwhelmingly preferred. Bulkhead seats, they're the ones basically the first row right

after the wall, exit rows and windows generally were preferred categories, but the top four seats, flyers preferred were all bulkhead windows seats.

Six-percent, that's the highest, 6% of respondents chose 1A in first class. So first row window C on the left. 5.7% chose window bulkhead seats in economy on the right. 5.6% chose the same on the left, and in fourth place back at the front, 4.3% of people were saying the same seat as first place, but on the other side of the plane. So that's the most sought-after seats. Number two, people love a window, of the top 10 seat choices, eight went to window seats throughout the whole plane. 66% of folks said they preferred a window seat. 32% were sensible aisle people and 2% of maniacs actually preferred being in the middle seat.

Rahul Chadha:

I know I was like the number of sociopaths who wanted to sit in the middle.

Ross Benes:

I feel like that's people who click the wrong answer.

Marcus Johnson:

Accidental.

Ross Benes:

That's just user survey.

Rahul Chadha:

No, those are the people who-

Marcus Johnson:

[inaudible 00:35:07].

Rahul Chadha:

Face off through the entire flight without picking up on cues that you just want to go to sleep.

Marcus Johnson:

Just me. Extra legroom seats are somewhat desirable. Two of the top 10 most preferred seats were exit row window seats. 41% of people are willing to take on the responsibilities of

assisting in an emergency for the benefit of more legroom. Two more for you. How willing are folks to pay to choose their seats? Nearly 60% of passengers are willing to pay to select their seat in advance and they're willing to shell out on average 34 bucks for the privilege. And finally, is it okay to recline your seat? The real answer is no, stop it. But 44% of U.S. flyers said it's rude when passengers recline their seats during a flight. Why do we have them? Why are people allowed to do it? You basically go from upright to slightly less upright and the person behind you goes from zero space to seat in my face.

Rahul Chadha:

Does that change though, if the person in front of you has reclined their seat and then you're reclining your seat to try to recoup the-

Marcus Johnson:

Oh, so everyone reclines?

Rahul Chadha:

Yeah.

Marcus Johnson:

They should do that. They should make an announcement at the front. "All right everyone, 1, 2, 3."

Ross Benes:

It sounds like you're just describing a Ponzi scheme. Got to get the buy-in from the person behind you, otherwise this doesn't work.

Marcus Johnson:

I do think they should say, "Ask the person behind you or let them know before you do it." Because that's the worst part of it is you always have food there-

Ross Benes:

You should have to pay them.

Marcus Johnson:

Or your laptop.

Ross Benes:

That's a negative 30. People pay \$30 to choose your seat. The guy in front of you, reclines in your face. That's a negative \$30 experience for you. Give me 30 bucks and the further you lay back, maybe you could lay all the way back for 50. Just throwing that out there.

Rahul Chadha:

[inaudible 00:37:00] \$50 for that.

Marcus Johnson:

Head in your lap? No.

Ross Benes:

Depends how long the flight is.

Marcus Johnson:

No amount of money. Absolutely not.

Rahul Chadha:

I'd throw in an extra 20 if I get a head massage.

Marcus Johnson:

We have to end the episode. It's got very weird. That's all we've got time for today. Thank you so much to my guests. Apart from the last bit, thank you to Ross.

Ross Benes:

Thanks Marcus.

Marcus Johnson:

Thank you to Rahul.

Rahul Chadha:

Thanks friend.

Marcus Johnson:

And thank you to Max.

Max Willens:

Always a pleasure, Marcus, thank you.

Marcus Johnson:

Yes indeed. Thank you to Victoria or V as I call her, who edits the shows. Stuart runs the team, Sophie does our social media, Lance runs our video podcast. Thanks to everyone for listening in. We hope to see you on Monday for Behind the Numbers Daily. It's an e-marketer podcast. Happiest of weekends.