



## On the Air: Networks reload for fall

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Here it comes again: another fall TV season where all the new shows shine - from a distance. When the shows actually air, that gleam fades and they stack the casualties like firewood.

But for now, it's all good. Hope springs eternal. Take Mark DeSantis, GM at WEEK-TV Channel 25 and WHOI-TV Channel 19, who said there's a lot to be excited about this season on both NBC and ABC networks.

NBC's blunders were so blatant last year that the network's best show, "30 Rock," openly made fun of it, including its impending purchase by Cabletown (Comcast in real life).

"NBC has turned the corner after the experiment with Leno in prime and Conan on the "Tonight Show,"" said the WEEK GM.

As the fourth-place network, NBC not only needs to turn the corner but run like mad for several blocks just to compete. At least the network's not superstitious, launching 13 new shows for the upcoming season.

New NBC programs include "Outsourced," a half-hour sitcom about a Midwestern retailer of novelties like whoopee cushions that outsources its call center to India (talk about timely), and yet another "Law & Order," this one set in - wait for it - L.A.

Meanwhile, ABC will offer up 10 new shows including "Body of Proof" with Dana Delany, "No Ordinary Family" starring Michael ("Shield") Chiklis and Matthew ("Friends") Perry's "Mr. Sunshine."

Fox has added just a couple of shows for the fall including "Running Wilde," a comedy starring Will Arnett and Keri Russell. The network plans to drop some other shows in at midseason, one being "Terra Nova," described as a "a prehistoric family adventure." You can't have too many of those.

As for front-running CBS, the big news may be that they're reviving "Hawaii Five-O." No, Jack Lord won't be on the scene (he died in Hawaii in 1998). Instead, it's a whole new series but feeds TV's insatiable appetite for shows based in the 50th state such as "Hawaiian Eye," "Magnum P.I." and "Baywatch Hawaii."

CBS doesn't really have to worry about new programming since the network returns 18 shows including hits like "NCIS," "Two and a Half Men," "Survivor" and the unsinkable "60 Minutes."

While the networks still invest a lot of time and effort in the promotion and placement of programming, the matter is getting increasingly moot.

Cable networks like USA, AMC and Syfy start and end series throughout the year. You can't flip on the set anymore without hearing about somebody's premier or finale for the season.

Sure, you've got a Thursday night comedy lineup on NBC but folks can watch them when they want in the Internet age.

This just in - Google believes it has come up with technology to marry Web and channel surfing. The TV sets that mix all those messages are scheduled to go on sale this fall - just about the time all those shiny, new shows launch.

Gary Stein, a vice president with the Isobar marketing firm, speaks to the benefit of watching TV connected to the Internet. "I'm totally blown away by it. The experience of browsing a catalog of movies from the Internet, clicking a button and having it stream (wirelessly) to the TV is pure magic," he noted in a recent online column.

"Thanks to players like Hulu, Boxee and SkyFire, we find a very different media space compared to five years ago," said Stein, adding that social media is also in demand.

"People want to surround their content with their people," he said, pointing to sites like Facebook and Twitter.

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