DIGIDAY VIDEO & TV AWARDS

DIGIDAY VIDEO & TV AWARDS

The Digiday Video and TV Awards mark a transformative year for visual content, one in which so many eyes turned to screens of every type for information, education, entertainment and a sense of communal activity during a time of quarantine.

From heart-touching rites of passage to breakneck production turnarounds as whole seasons of programming were upended by pandemic-wrought changes, the awards this year represent a doubling down on the personal as well as an opening-up of approaches to workflow and creative storytelling.

The 2021 Digiday Video and TV Awards represent an industry at its best in many ways — from technology to social engagement to protecting each other and ourselves. This year's winners produced content that amounted to a mirror — one that showed people working every day to live well and stay connected no matter the circumstances of the times.

Best Brand Film - Single

HP Inc. and Redglass Pictures - ‘Dear Future Me’

Redglass Pictures

Program

HP and Redglass tapped into a personal world of storytelling with ‘Dear Future Me,’ highlighting a local right of passage one quarter-century in the making. Invited behind the scenes at Maplewood Middle School in suburban New Jersey, the video crew captured the world of sixth graders as they composed and revealed letters to the future — to their 25-year-old selves. The poignant exploration of growing up won coverage and attention from Teen Vogue, SiriusXM and ‘The Today Show’ on NBC, among other media outlets.

Insights

While the campaign’s goals revolved around video views, social media engagement and click-throughs, the earned media that ‘Dear Future Me” achieved transformed the story of middle schoolers into a relatable moment for the world, and demonstrated the power of content to inspire hope, resilience and optimism — especially in the trying times of 2020.



Best Brand Film - Series

EA and m/SIX - ‘FIFA2020 Changes the Game’





Program

Tasked with making a splash out of the worldwide launch of the FIFA2020 video game, EA and m/SIX turned to the stories of the player, spotlighting the passion and unique angles of the people and play styles that don’t always take center stage across the year. Viewers of ‘Groundbreakers,’ a 20-episode video series, learned about Brazilian Twitch player Diogo Pe who was born without hands and plays FIFA with his feet; UK street-soccer player Lisa Freestyle, who turned down a pro career to follow her passion; and South Africa’s flashy “Kasi Flava” style of soccer.

Insights

Sometimes effective storytelling involves switching focus and diving into details that reinvigorate familiar tales. The giants of a sport will always move tickets — and copies of the video games featuring them — but EA and m/SIX seized an opportunity to move people’s minds and hearts, making FIFA2020 stand out in a crowded category.

Best Ad

LiftMaster and SCC - ‘Oh Yeah’

LiftMaster

SCC

Program

Calling back to a perennial favorite from the 1980s classics of director John Hughes, ‘Oh Yeah,’ returns viewers to the garage — and the bright red Ferrari — from fan favorite ‘Ferris Bueller’s Day Off.’ Actor Alan Ruck reprises his role, playing an older Cameron who is a lot smarter about keeping his treasured vehicle safe than his own dad, thanks to the LiftMaster smart garage — and its onboard camera features.

Insights

Nostalgia is power in the world of advertising and LiftMaster’s and SCC’s campaign tapped a major vein of fond memories. More importantly, ‘Oh Yeah’ strikes a critical balance: playing with a known property while justifying the callback with a smart twist, and all the while incorporating myQ and LiftMaster product features into the story in a way that actually makes narrative sense. A triumph.



Best Live Moment

Barkley and Planet Fitness - ‘United We Move’

Program

With its clientele under quarantine and lockdown, Planet Fitness created ‘The Home Work-In,’ a free, daily, live 20-minute workout series hosted by its own trainers, pro athletes and celebrities such as Julian Edelman, Shawn Johnson, Jerry O’Connell and David Ortiz. Webcast on Facebook Live the program launched just two days after Planet Fitness closed all of its 2,000 locations.

Insights

The year 2020 was a low point in many physical fitness routines, with stay-at-home orders causing gyms to close. Daily step counts decreased by 50%, and 66% of gym members decreased their physical activity. Ensure that staying at home didn’t have to mean staying glued to the couch, Planet Fitness paid it forward for its members in a meaningful way during trying times — and earned brand recognition and loyalty to boot.



Best Social Video Campaign

Comedy Central Digital - ‘Vote Naked’ and ‘Thirst Trap the Vote’

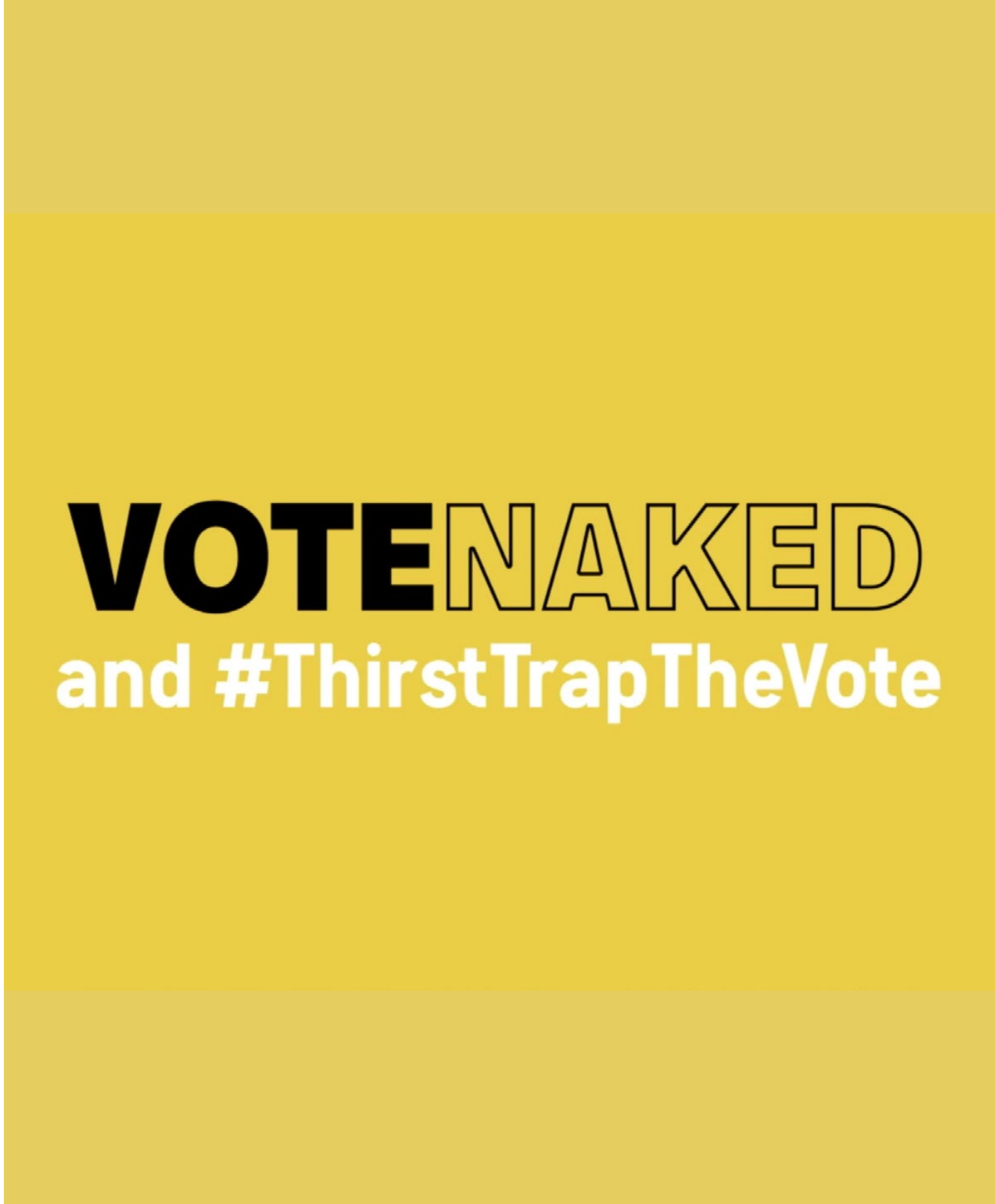
COMEDY CENTRAL

Program

In a nine-episode social media video series, Comedy Central Digital gathered more than a dozen comedians and creators to drive audiences from their own channels to a custom voting information page during the 2020 national elections in the United States. The page, votevotevote.com, highlighted essential pro-voting messaging with entertaining content — and a lot of laughs.

Insights

Popular voices move people to take action, and Comedy Central Digital’s election-themed effort opened pathways to participation in a year when so much was at stake. Empowering voters to check their ballot registrations and learn more about voting options created positive brand associations for the comedians, the channel and the people advocating for participation in critical civic moments.



Best Multi-Platform Video Campaign

Freeform - #StayTheFFHome Do's and Don'ts

FREEFORM

Program

Freeform used its strength as a premiere young adult entertainment brand to create a multi-platform social distancing campaign aimed at young adults. The campaign featured a PSA that put the spotlight on Freeform talent, plus packaging and promo around weekend movies. From there, audiences could tap into social-media content including supercuts, memes, polls, Zoom backgrounds and more.

Insights

The effects of social distancing in 2020 strained everyone's sense of communal togetherness and meaningful ways to interact. Freeform seized the moment and drove a dual message: Staying home was about safety and protecting others, and the community it created for those higher purposes could still carry a sense of fun and locking arms. So many campaigns in 2020 highlighted the social impact of solitary living, and Freeform brought the message to the masses while keeping the focus on its original content.



Best Video Ad Tech Innovation

Spirable and Aldi

DIGIDAY VIDEO & TV AWARDS

Program

In a campaign geared toward keeping grocery shoppers safe during the pandemic, Spirable and Aldi turned to store-traffic data. With the help of agency McCann Manchester they were able to craft social-distancing messaging and communicate more than 3,400 video ads to customers across Facebook and Instagram, targeting nearly 900 locations with tailored, localized units that advised about foot traffic and which stores were quietest at which times.

Insights

So many campaigns in 2020 fused the practical with the pandemic, and Aldi and Spirable are a case in point. When social distancing was on everyone's mind, and the stakes for buying the food and household items that shoppers needed presented unprecedented risk, the supermarket chain turned its ads into loyalty-building opportunities that foreground help — and health — in a time of need.

spirable

ALDI

Best TV Ad Tech Innovation

Gamut Media

DIGIDAY VIDEO & TV AWARDS

Program

As advertisers turned to OTT and CTV solutions, in 2020, a year when on-screen inventory became increasingly affordable for even mid-sized companies and smaller players, Gamut introduced a proprietary planning tool to accurately forecast local OTT video media plans with TV-like calculations. Using first-party data, customer data and third-party sources, advertisers were able to target relevant, engaged audiences across designated marketing areas (DMAs) — even at the ZIP code level.

Insights

There's no question that omnichannel marketing strategies will increasingly — and inevitably — put OTT among the foremost approaches. With that said, targeting, measurement and attribution are very much on marketers' minds. Gamut timed its product perfectly, putting video-media targeting tools into market just as new demand surged.

gamut TOTAL®

Best Streaming Service

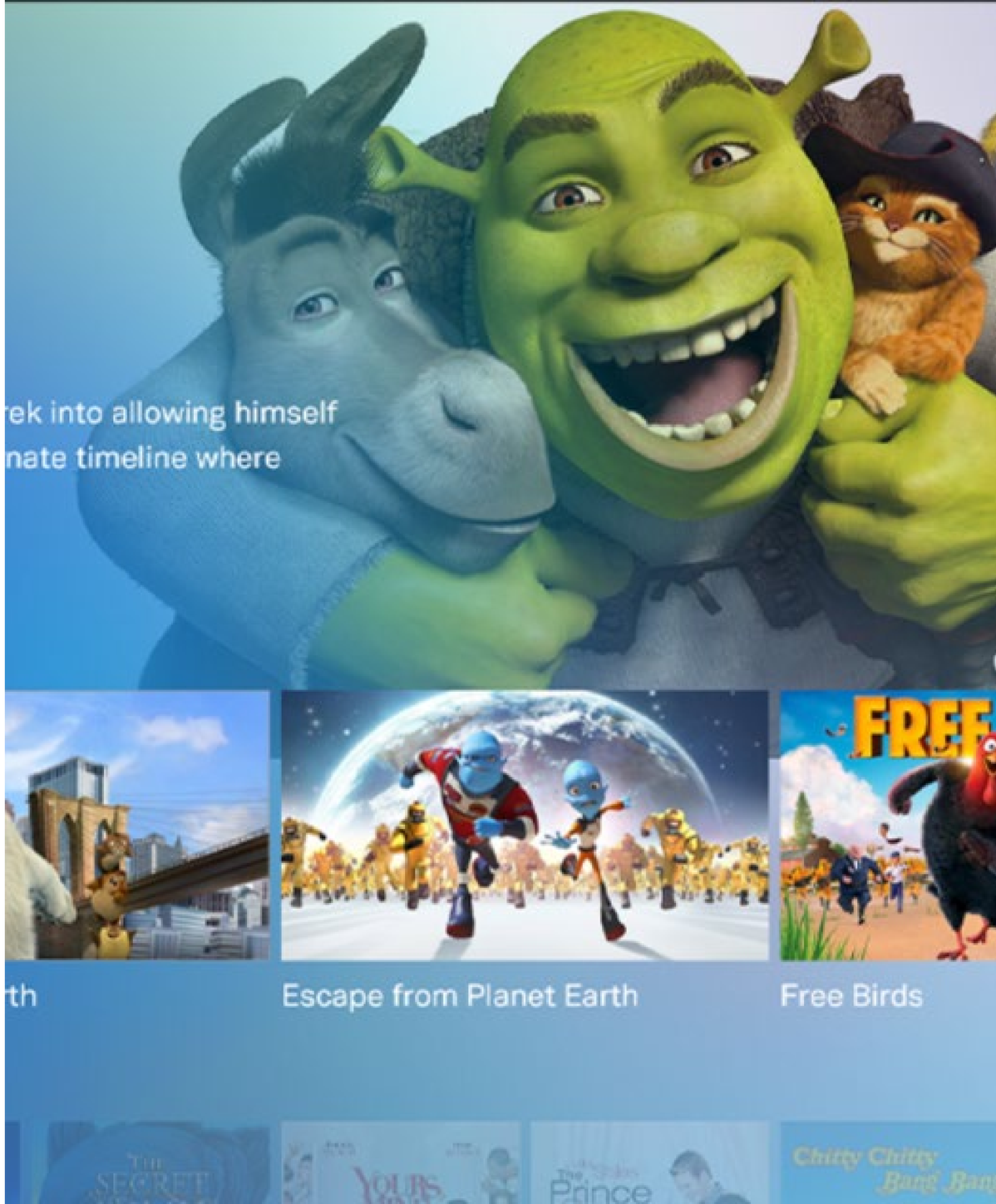
Tubi

Program

Tubi is an ad-supported video on demand (AVOD) service with a massive library of more than 26,000 movies and television shows from nearly every major Hollywood studio. Its library, including a whole section of age-appropriate viewing for kids, gives fans of entertainment an easy way to discover new content that is available free of charge.

Insights

While there were more eyes on screens watching content for longer, day after day, in 2020, not everyone was in a place to add a slew of subscription streaming to their quarantine-bound menus. Sticking to its ad-supported approach, Tubi positioned itself as the affordable content-discovery library with a premium touch. The service also knew that more at-home kids would be turning to more shows — and its Tubi Kids expansion was almost certainly a welcome addition to families' at-home options.



Best Streaming TV Platform

Circle TV

Program

A joint venture between Opry Entertainment Group, (a subsidiary of Ryman Hospitality Properties) and Gray TV, Circle TV connects country music fans with a deep library of content, including archived Grand Ole Opry concerts, documentaries and new shows as well. The interview series 'Circle Sessions' is an example, featuring favorite artists such as Carrie Underwood, Luke Bryan, Dierks Bentley and more.

Insights

Circle saw the need for a one-stop-content shop for country music fans that didn't really exist anywhere else — serving fans who want to access the best audiovisual content in country music's past and present. With the lack of concerts, backstage passes and intimate shows, in 2020, Circle TV doubled down on bringing country to the fans, keeping the flame of finding new music burning bright — and keeping the connection between artist and audience alive for when stages are filled with music again.



Best Digital Platform

In the Know

DIGIDAY VIDEO & TV AWARDS

Program

In the Know is a social-media based video platform that aims to connect Generation Z to previously unknown voices, keeping its youthful audience up to date on stories that resonate with them. There are seven separate categories in total: Tech and Living, Beauty, Style, Wellness, Gaming and E-sports — and general interest.

Insights

In the Know builds compelling content around an age-old question: "What are kids doing these days?" The approach is deceptively simple — focus on where young, digital-first audiences hang out. And many of them, it turns out, are on TikTok. Thanks to a production team that is constantly monitoring social-media channels, In the Know's editors and producers have been able to create and track engagement across a wide range of existing content that they incorporate into their content creation process. Paired with the user-generated content techniques of the savviest TikTokers, In the Know has achieved — and earned — relevance with its Gen Z viewers quickly.

ITK.

Best Connected Platform

VIZIO — SmartCast

VIZIO

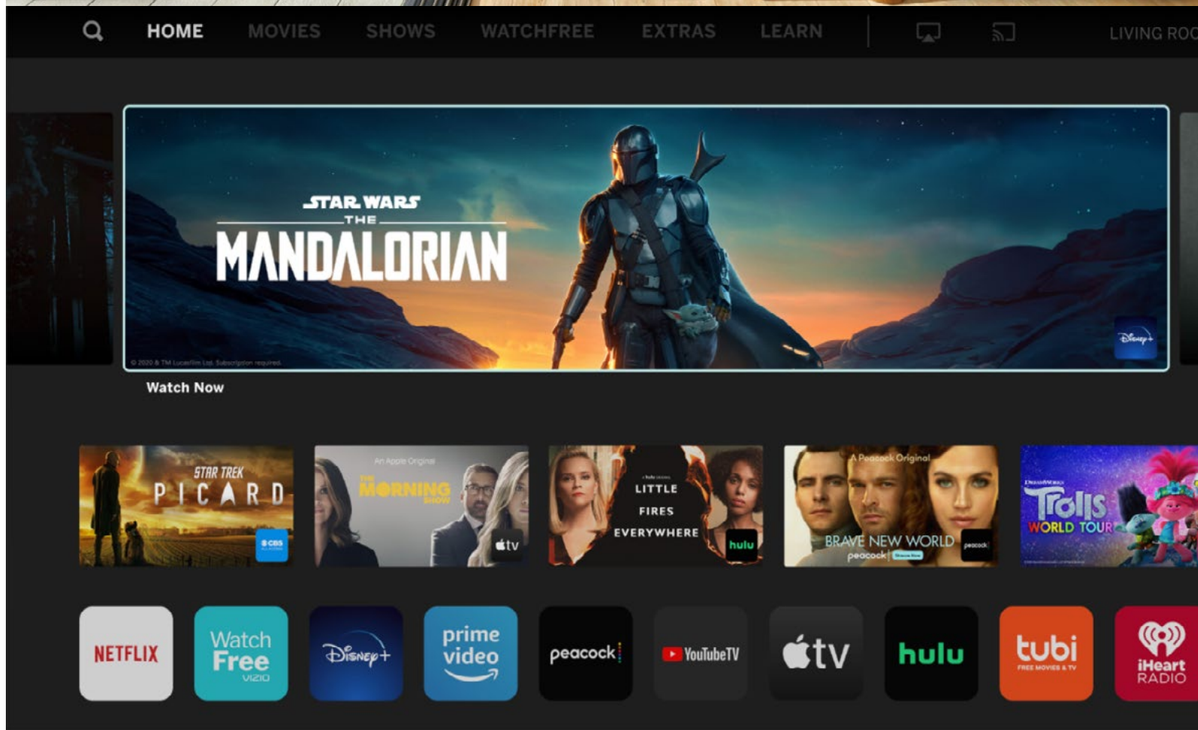
Program

SmartCast is VIZIO's operating system that arrives aboard the company's smart TVs. With a focus on creating personalized experiences for the modern consumer — lately, one who's been separated from friends and family and seeks a fully integrated streaming experience to fill their hours — SmartCast comes fully equipped with Netflix, Disney+, Apple TV, Hulu, Prime Video, as well as a host of other channels.

Insights

It's not enough for consumers to have choices. SmartCast supports connectivity and unlocks user control — including voice-activated experiences across Google Assistant and Alexa-enabled devices. The platform also connects with mobile devices of all kinds. SmartCast audiences are never far from their content, and with so many providers packed into the platform, they're never short on choices.





Best Use of YouTube

The Wild and Major League Baseball — ‘Bases Covered’

Junglecreations

Program

‘Bases Covered’ was originally designed to educate and inspire European fans of American baseball during preseason. In 2020, however, the content had to shift gears abruptly due to lockdown. The 10-episode series successfully pivoted from filming preseason activities to creating more interview-style content that connected with fans, letting them know they weren’t forgotten, and that baseball would be back.

Insights

MLB stepped up to the plate and decided to keep the excitement surrounding Opening Day fresh by bringing together a roster of baseball stars to discuss various aspects of the game. By keeping the content varied, introducing topics ranging from ballpark food to pitching, and with a solid number of guest stars and cameo appearances, ‘Bases Covered’ engaged and entertained, even while the diamonds stood empty.



Best Snapchat Show

Insider - ‘Beauty Insider’

DIGIDAY VIDEO & TV AWARDS

Program

‘Beauty Insider’ is a lifestyle brand under the Insider umbrella, and in 2020 the show leveraged Snapchat to educate users about the latest tips and tricks surrounding hair, skin, nails and beauty industry trends. One key feature, ‘The Zit Fix’ showcased a relatable producer reviewing acne products and helping viewers address the face-forward challenges that quarantine-bound audiences needed to solve before their next Zoom conference.

Insights

Two elements are dominating the social media “airwaves” these days: short content and beauty content. Beauty Insider combined both to create a potent elixir for Snapchat-based consumers. By leveraging strong storytelling skills and visual media, ‘Beauty Insider’ cracked the code in connecting to an at-home beauty-hungry audience.

Insider Inc.

Best Use of TikTok

Lippe Taylor and Mucinex — ‘Wake Up Human’/ #BeatTheZombieFunk

Lippe Taylor

Mucinex

Program

Mucinex partnered with choreographers to create dance moves that would pair nicely with the hashtag #BeatTheZombieFunk. By changing the focus from what congestion looks like to how colds make a person feel, Mucinex tapped into a story that could communicate the power of their medicine in a fresh, relatable way.

Insights

The immediate challenge was finding “the cool” aspect of Mucinex and making it accessible to a younger, digitally savvy audience across marketing channels. The integrated ‘Wake Up Human’ launch campaign featuring zombies and dance moves was broadcast across both traditional and modern channels, including TV, social media, PR and traditional advertising. The campaign also may have had unintentional relevance: In the age of coronavirus, the prospect of feeling good, dancing and starting a day feeling healthy became more important than ever.



Best Use of Instagram Stories

XX Artists and YouTube — ‘This or That’

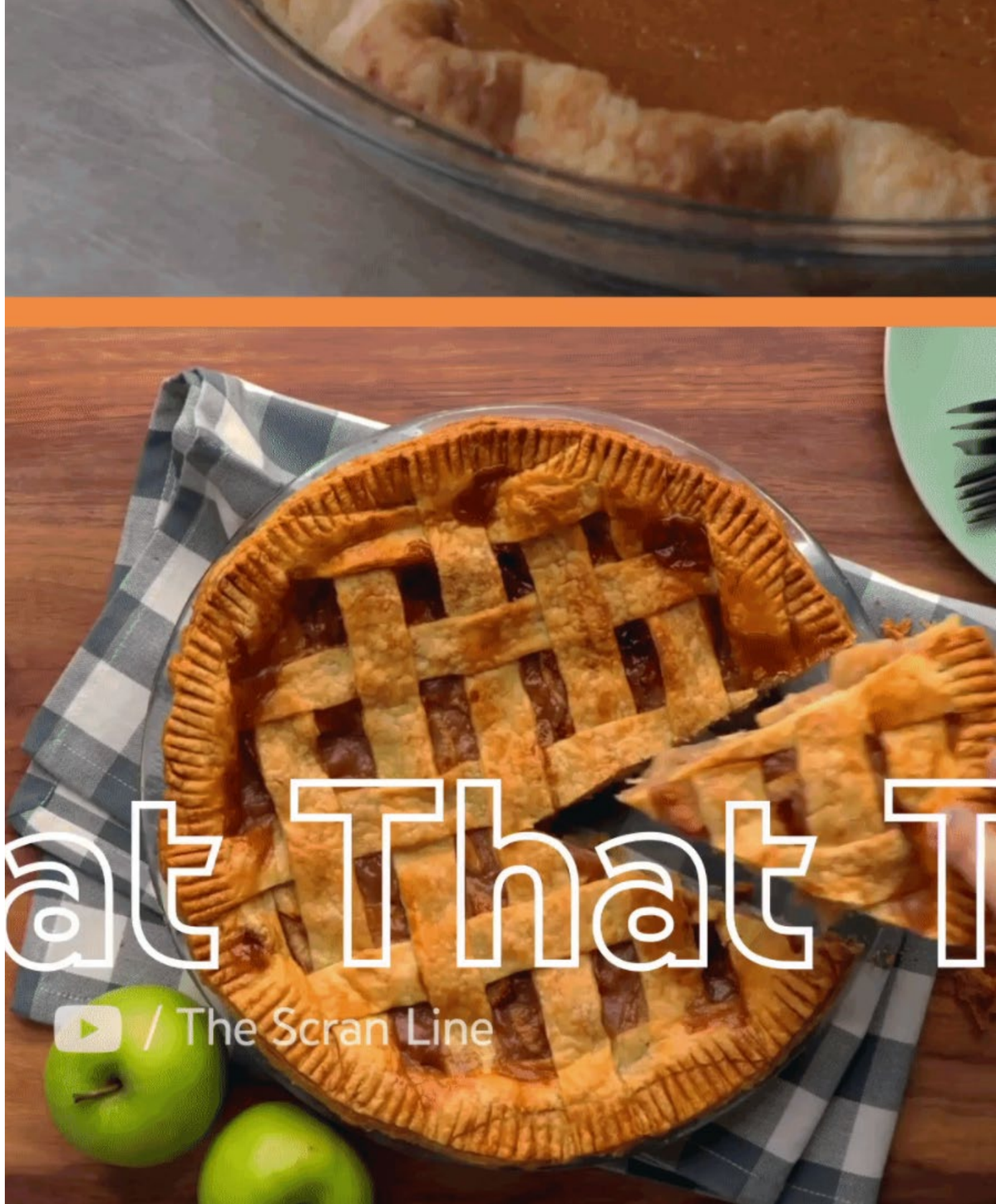
XX ARTISTS™

Program

XX Artists and Instagram partnered to create an engaging format where consumers could choose their content — and the idea of ‘This or That’ was born. Using Instagram Stories’ embedded features, consumers could vote between one of two choices of activities, themes or actions.

Insights

By prompting consumers to make a choice, YouTube was able to achieve two goals at once: concretely measure engagement and collect user data that indicates what the consumer is doing. The eternal marketing questions: “What is my consumer thinking and how do I know if they’re really interacting with the content I’m putting in front of them?” are answered instantaneously by clicking on Instagram Stories’ simple but effective voting mechanism.



Best Facebook Watch Show

South China Morning Post — ‘Eat China’ Season 2

Program

Goldthread is a video platform owned by the news company South China Morning Post. After debuting the pilot series of ‘Eat China,’ showcasing regional Chinese cuisine for a global audience, Goldthread focused exclusively on noodles in the second season — rolling out a 10-episode series, one noodle style per episode, demonstrating the wide range of diversity within the noodle family of Chinese cooking.

Insights

Short and fat, long and thin, hand-pulled or hand-cut, Goldthread was able to transition seamlessly to the inner workings of noodle culture without missing a beat or losing their audience. For those who miss the Anthony Bourdain-style show of learning about various cuisines in different regions, this show may have struck a chord as well. But there was an important twist: The host of the show is ethnically Chinese herself, giving the audience an authentic and personal point of view, and a sense of peeking behind the scenes in a Chinese kitchen.



Best Snapchat Discover Publisher

‘60 Second Docs’

Program

‘60 Second Docs’ is a series of short documentaries designed for social sharing. With more than 400 episodes so far, all of them are optimized for and are featured on Snapchat Discover. ‘60 Second Docs’ is now a top-performing digital docuseries that highlights the various aspects of the lived human experience.

Insights

It’s tough to tell a compelling story in 60 seconds, and it’s even more challenging to do so in a way that captures the mercurial attention of a social-media crowd. But ‘60 Second Docs’ identified a sweet spot between short attention spans and a thirst for authentic content that connects to both the mundane and sublime portions of human experience. And for that they’ve been rewarded with a growing audience, engagement and industry recognition.



Best New TV/ Streaming Ad Sales Program or Product

Digital Remedy - Flip

DIGIDAY VIDEO & TV AWARDS

Program

Flip's all-in-one OTT and CTV solution features a full spectrum of attribution and measurement capabilities, covering sales, lead generation, site visits, store visits, app installs and more. Brands can customize OTT campaigns to target specific audiences by date, streaming platform, device, demographic, geo-location, time-of-day, behavior, gender, income and other factors.

Insights

If a central challenge for OTT and CTV advertisers is attribution — how to measure it, how to adjust for it and how to capitalize on it — the feature set in Flip is a huge win for brands. Not only does it promise bottom-funnel results, it opens the game board to marketers along the lines of mid-flight changes and optimizations based on publisher performance. A game changer for any team's KPIs.

Digital Remedy®

Best Digital Video Monetization Program

RewardStyle and LiketoKnow.it - LTK Shopping Video

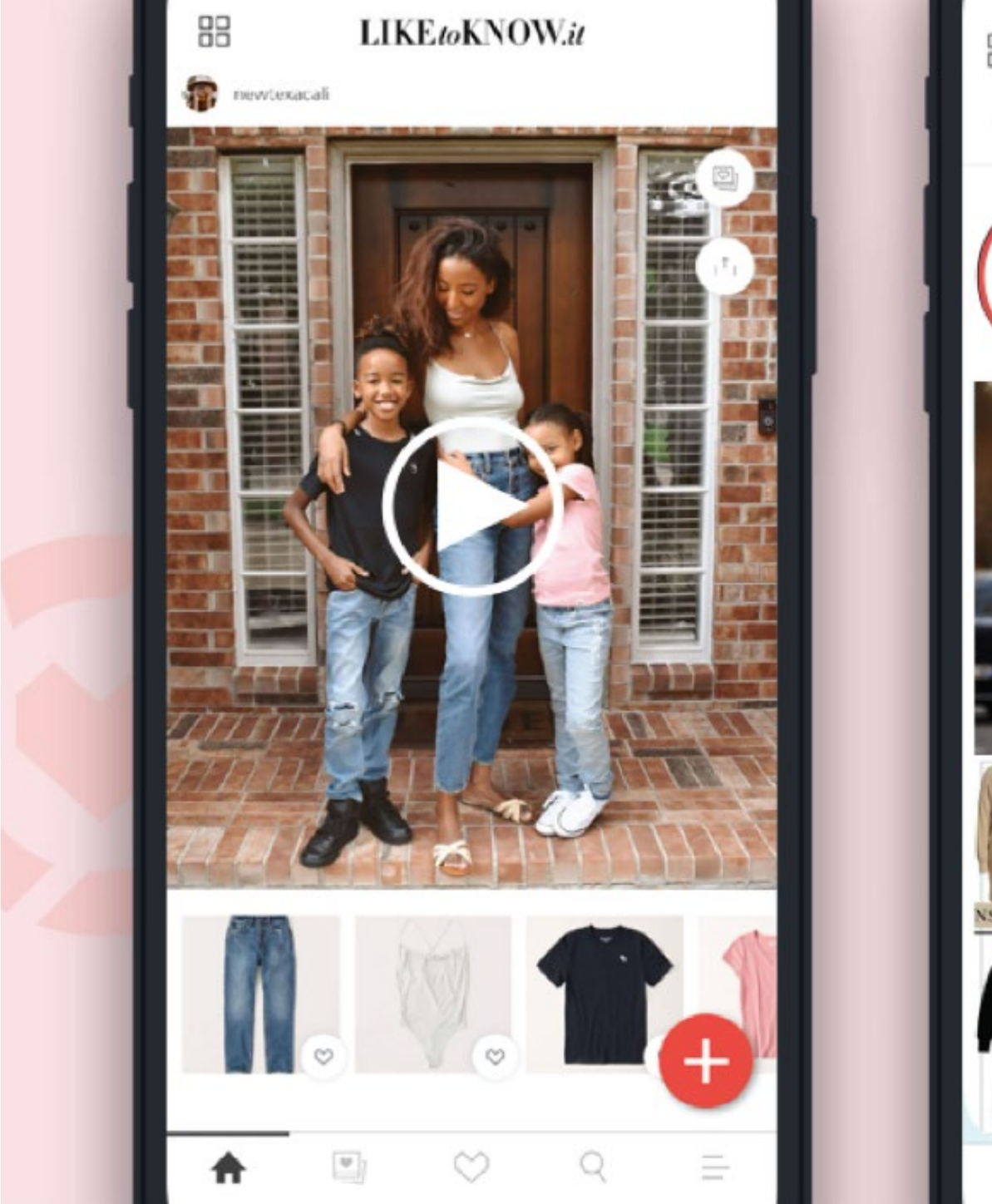
LIKEtoKNOW.it rewardStyle

Program

When the pandemic made in-person shopping impossible, influencer marketing platform RewardStyle and shopping app LiketoKnow launched a virtual shopping alternative. Their mobile shopping videos allowed people to browse product images and videos from more than 5,000 fashion, home, beauty, fitness and family retailers.

Insights

To create a buzzy debut, RewardStyle launched the mobile feature live at its annual virtual edition of 'RewardStyle The Conference,' a three-day educational event that connects the platform's network of fashion, beauty and lifestyle influencers with global retail brands.



Best Publisher Pivot to TV

Jukin Media - WeatherSpy and People Are Awesome

DIGIDAY VIDEO & TV AWARDS

Program

In 2020, Jukin Media, an entertainment company that licenses user-generated content, launched two streaming networks: People Are Awesome, inspired by the company's social media brand of the same name and WeatherSpy, a weather channel that launched on free ad-supported social media platforms.

Insights

Jukin Media struck distribution deals with U.S. services including NBCU's Peacock and Vizio's WatchFree, as well as international services including Pluto TV LATAM. The company also entered licensing agreements with digitally-native and traditional TV content providers, and has content partners including College Humor, Cineflix and Obsesh Media.

JUKIN MEDIA

Best Video Publisher Partner for Brands

Minute Media - Voltax Video

DIGIDAY VIDEO & TV AWARDS

Program

Media company Minute Media launched Voltax Video, an online video platform designed to strengthen publishers' video strategies while reducing costs. The platform provides publishers with technology to produce video experiences, as well as access to a content library.

Insights

Voltax Video includes a vendor management system, built-in monetization tools and an in-house business intelligence team. Minute Media's objective with the new platform is to provide partners with video technology that is efficient, eliminates high licensing and operating costs and helps them with scalability and revenue growth.

VOLTAX By Minute Media

minute media

Best Video Distribution and Programming Strategy

Indigenous Media - ‘60 Second Docs’

DIGIDAY VIDEO & TV AWARDS

Program

Indigenous Media’s ‘60 Second Docs’ is a web series that highlights the human experience and interesting characters through short documentaries designed for social sharing. The company’s objective is to introduce Gen Z and millennials to the documentary genre on social media.

Insights

The company released 151 new episodes of ‘60 Second Docs’ in 2020, using social channels such as Facebook’s and Instagram’s posts, Stories, Reels and IGTV, plus Snapchat Discover, Imgur and Giphy.

60 SECOND DOCS

Best TV Distribution and Programming Strategy

NBC News - Custom Productions Unit

DIGIDAY VIDEO & TV AWARDS

Program

NBC News' content studio Custom Productions creates editorial sponsorship programs for brands. Custom Productions combines product insights and multi-platform distribution with NBC News's talent, production and commerce capabilities.

Insights

Custom Productions was key in building buzz for NBCUniversal's new streaming service Peacock and the 'Today' franchise's new streaming channel Today All Day. The content studio produced 'Peacock Presents: Holiday Steals & Deals with Jill Martin,' a two-hour shoppable event that drove record one-day viewership for Today All Day as well as millions in sales.

NBC NEWS

Best Production Pivot

Hulu - ‘Hulu Has Live Sports Again’

hulu

Program

After the pandemic paused live sports and ads for live sports, Hulu celebrated the return of multiple professional leagues with a COVID-19-safe campaign in August 2020. ‘Hulu Has Live Sports Again’ used body doubles and digital face replacement technology in two ads. One ad featured basketball players Damian Lillard and Sylar Diggins Smith leaving behind quarantine hobbies like bread-baking and painting and going back to the court. A second superimposed the faces of football players Baker Mayfield and Saquon Barkley on less-athletic body doubles.

Insights

Professional league bubbles and production limitations forced Hulu to get creative with filming the ads. To incorporate digital face replacement, the streamer sent athletes sanitized iPhones and tasked family and friends with filming while the brand directed the spots over Zoom. Hulu then transposed the home footage onto existing footage to create the final commercials.





Digital Studio of the Year

TheSoul Publishing

DIGIDAY VIDEO & TV AWARDS

Program

TheSoul Publishing is a digital media studio that produces short-form videos on content channels including 5-Minute Crafts, Bright Side, 123 Go!, Avocado Couple, La La Life, Slick Slime Sam and Teen-Z. The videos draw views across YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and Pinterest.

Insights

During the pandemic, TheSoul Publishing created life-hack themed content to engage viewers stuck at home. The studio partnered with Mattel to produce a campaign on YouTube that merged Barbie into 5-Minute Crafts content. To reach TikTok users, the studio teamed up with the video-sharing platform on the #LearnOnTikTok initiative, a selection of family-oriented educational and instructional activities.

THESOUL PUBLISHING

Video Executive of the Year

Louise King, executive producer, distillery

distillery

The executive

As the executive producer at U.K. content studio Distillery, Louise King ensures that company talent produces videos within budget, on time and that reflect the company's artistic and technical standards. As a side project, Louise leads Mother of All Media, a platform that offers advice for working parents who are navigating the creative industry.

Insights

Under Louise's guidance, Distillery produced a two-week video campaign for the Disasters Emergency Committee Coronavirus Appeal, focused on protecting vulnerable people from COVID-19. The partnership raised more than £18 million (around $24 million) to provide families with clean water, soap, food, medical supplies and information on how to stay safe during the pandemic.



TV Executive of the Year

Adam Ostrow, Chief Digital Officer, Tegna

TEGNA



The executive

Ostrow is Chief Digital Officer at Tegna, a broadcast media and marketing services company that has 64 stations in 51 markets and reaches 39% of all television households in the U.S. Tegna stations are also available on Roku and Amazon Fire TV. Ostrow leads the company's digital expansion to ensure customers have more options to view Tegna's content.

Insights

Ostrow oversaw the expansion of Tegna's Verify franchise to Snapchat and launched Near Me, a mobile app feature for users to share photos and videos and watch community news from local stations. Ostrow also led the redesign of mobile web and desktop sites and launched a new "Watch" feature on stations' websites and mobile apps, which created a unified, cross-platform video viewing option.

DIGIDAY VIDEO & TV AWARDS

Digiday Media's awards programs focus on the best work being done across media and marketing, fashion, beauty and retail. Entries are evaluated by jury panels made up of C-level executives from industry-leading organizations, and winners are featured in Digiday Media's coverage, marketing, Awards Guides, galas and other announcements. Our awards programs have recognized companies and campaigns since 2014.

For more information on this or other Digiday Awards programs, visit: digiday.com/awards

Questions for the awards team? Let us know at: awards@digiday.com