

Paying for Content

In “Here Come the Next Must-Have Tech Products” (Alsop on Infotech, Aug. 14), Stewart Alsop raises a question I’ve heard many times recently: Who’s going to pay the TV industry the money it needs to finance programming?

My position is that the consumer is already paying far too much for entertainment, but that the funds are being badly used by the industry. Remember life before cable television? Today we pay a monthly bill for our cable channels—which have paid advertising, including infomercials. At movie theaters and sports stadiums, we are forced to watch advertisements at events for which we paid admission.

There’s a current joke that we have 100 channels and there’s nothing to watch. Interest in network television programs (even *Monday Night Football*) has waned. At the same time record numbers of bad movies are being made that don’t make money. Some movie companies have refined their marketing of bad movies so that they still get made but go right to video once it’s been determined that they will have a small audience in the theaters. It’s a pity that they can’t refine their marketing so that the bad movie isn’t made in the first place.

The entertainment industry and the Internet industry are overflowing with businesses spending lots of money on bad content in a lottery-like manner, in hopes that their program or Website will prove a winning ticket. At the same time, the same technologies are allowing individuals to focus on those things that really interest them, at the lowest possible cost.

WES TYLER
Easton, Conn.