

MIP @ BroadbandTVcon

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4-5 minutes

MIP recently attended [BroadbandTVcon](#), the broadband TV and multi-screen summit held at the Loews Hollywood Hotel on November 5-6. X Media Research, Inc. hosted the conference, with representatives from some industry leaders, like Fox and CBS, and a slate of new entrants, ranging from Yahoo! and Roku to the Pivot and AwesomenessTV networks. Many of the discussions at the conference focused on “growth opportunities” offered by the distribution of television content online, but dueling mindsets between the terrestrial networks and born-digital companies betrayed an ongoing battle over the future of television.

Formerly OTTCON (over-the-top con), this year’s BroadbandTVcon marked its sixth year but the first time the conference has been held in Hollywood. An event focused upon the buying and selling of digital services and software, BroadbandTVcon attracts dozens of media and technology startups hoping to expand their businesses. Sitting down for a coffee break in the exhibit hall, it’s easy to bump into an

entrepreneur whose business marries curated Twitter feeds to digital television content, or a businessman who has designed his own set-top boxes to sell to hotel chains. The mood at BroadbandTVcon is almost entirely one of unbridled optimism for the future of media online.



President of Video for the [AOL On](#) Network, Ran Harnevo, delivered the keynote address on the conference's first day, challenging traditional definitions of TV by illustrating the success of the web-only AOL On. Providing its video content to any interested online distributor, AOL On has built a network of hundreds of websites.

Harnevo touted statistics that suggest a general shift among consumers toward online content and lauded the proliferation of smartphones and tablets over the shrinking TV market. He described the TV of tomorrow not as a piece of hardware or even a subscription package but as a connected ecosystem of curated content across platforms, screens, and devices, or something akin to Netflix. (Harnevo failed to mention other

possible reasons for a [shrinking](#) TV market—market saturation and recessionary economies, for example, are very different than a general shift in consumer interest). Stating a theme that others echoed, Harnevo argued that scale matters, and that the web now offers greater scale than terrestrial TV (across 1,700 sites, AOL On content reaches 161 million viewers versus 35 million for CBS, for example). Yet, Harnevo strategically avoided any discussion of revenues, as the vast gulf between what AOL On earns and what legacy television networks rack up risks undermining (or, at the very least, qualifying) proclamations about our unbundled, digital future.

While the conference focused upon digital media, with many attendees representing new entrants to the media business, delegates from established media brands sat on each panel as well. In their talks, the legacy companies tended to view broadband television as additive rather than transformative. Ezra Kucharz, President of CBS Local Digital Media, argued in a panel on Video Everywhere that the majority of people would never cut the cord, illustrating the two clashing perspectives present at the conference. Similarly, Kiliaen Van Rensselaer from Fox Networks described web channels as the first window, a model that envisions the Internet as a place for experimentation that ultimately feeds into more traditional distribution strategies.

Here are our major [takeaways](#) from the conference, and you can also learn more about the conference from [VideoNuze](#) and [nScreenMedia](#) in podcast form. You may also reference our [Twitter feed](#) if you want our initial reactions to the discussions.