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## Mobile Vs TV: Media & ad honchos battle it out at MELT 2015

The IAA Debate at MELT 2015 saw Arnab Goswami, Rajiv Lochan, Raghav Bahl and Vikram Sakhujha debate over whether mobile has overtaken TV as the primary screen for news & entertainment

Aanchal Kohli | Mumbai | May 22, 2015



The mobile trend was very much prominent on day one of MELT 2015, being held in Mumbai. The festival was abuzz with the IAA Debate, where Arnab Goswami, Editor-in-Chief, Times Now, and Rajiv Lochan, CEO, Kasturi & Sons, against The Quint's Raghav Bahl and Vikram Sakhujha, Group CEO & equity partner, Madison, battled out the question as to whether mobile has overtaken TV as the primary screen for news and entertainment.

Sonali Krishna moderated the debate and the audience was privy to some heated discussion on the topic.



Vikram Sakhujha opened the debate by observing that with growing internet penetration, email is one of most used mediums today and soon it will become the primary medium to post anything. "In India, we have three times more emails than snail mails. At the same time, there is no doubt about the fact that mobile will also become a primary medium soon for consumption of news and entertainment," he added.

Sakhujha stated that the consumption of news would be in bite size and would increase rapidly on mobile because of the convenience that consumers got out of this medium. "Mobile is not a zero sum game, rather it is a market expansion game," he maintained. He also mentioned that even in the case of entertainment, the usage of mobile is growing day by day. Sakhujha mentioned the example of Hindustan Unilever's Kan Khajura Tesan and stated, "In the media dark places of India, mobile is the only screen for entertainment."



On the contrary, Arnab Goswami pointed out that despite the huge internet penetration in the UK and the US, television still held the top position and was the primary medium of consumption. He noted, "98 per cent of TV viewing happens in normal households and interestingly, there is no digital company that created content 24x7, hence most of the content that goes online is from television and print."

He also highlighted that in India, internet penetration was still very low and the usage of 3G and 4G was even lower. "There are a majority of places where people do not have a feature phone or a smart phone, so for them print and television plays a vital role," he added.

Goswami also stated that television penetration in India was far ahead of mobile and internet penetration and that television is still the most preferred medium for consuming news and entertainment. "I am not saying that mobile will not become a primary screen in 35 years, but it will surely not become a primary screen in the next three or four years," he added.



On the other hand, Raghav Bahl said that the debate was not about television versus mobile, but about the changing consumption behaviour of the consumers. He noted, "The last thing that consumers today do is to look at their mobile screens before going to sleep and then the first thing that they do after getting up in the morning is to again check their mobile. In three to four years, we will have over 500 million smartphones and that will be the tripping point."

Stating another fact, Bahl said, "Mobile has broken the concept of prime time. Every time is prime time for mobile users. Today, consumers are finding it much easier to consume news and entertainment on mobile."



According to Rajiv Lochan, there were three elements to this debate - 'primary screen', 'news' and 'entertainment'. "In India, the broadband and internet infrastructure is still buffering, hence consumers face a lot of congestion in terms of call drops, low internet connectivity and more. But in case of television, there is no such issue," he pointed out. He believes that it will take a lot of time to build that kind of infrastructure.

While closing the debate, Bahl said, "Majority of people get primary information on mobile." Sakhujha asked, "When 80 per cent of your day is on the move, then how will one consume content on television?" Arnab Goswami pointed out, "90 per cent of India does not have a feature phone and do not use high speed internet."

The debate was won by Arnab Goswami and Rajiv Lochan, who stated that mobile would not be the primary screen for news and entertainment in the next three to four years.

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