

ONLINE & DIGITAL MEDIA NEWS – ED THE SOCK’S NEWMUSICNATION MAKES ITS DEBUT

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NewMusicNation, the new online music video channel helmed by former MuchMusic icon Ed the Sock, has made its debut. Focused on independent music, Ed the Sock creator Steven Kerzner says to start the channel will feature two to three hours of new content a week, featuring programming blocks like Yo Canada!, featuring all-Canadian talent, and Video Overload. Other shows on offer include Rapsody, hosted by London, ON rapper Sum_01; GenPop hosted by VJ Candy Marie; The Punk Projekt with Toronto punk legend John Tard; Metal Momentum, hosted by standup comic and recovering addict Robbie Stevenson; Videoflow with Inuvik’s Dez Loreen; and Are You Kidding, spotlighting humorous (intentionally or otherwise) videos hosted by Ed the Sock. The launch of the channel, which aims to capture the spirit of the original MuchMusic, comes as Bell Media launches its own revival of the brand on TikTok, featuring a new generation of digital creators.

Wattpad, the Toronto-based social storytelling platform, and WEBTOON, the world’s largest digital comics platform, have announced that the companies will merge their studio divisions to create Wattpad WEBTOON Studios. South Korean internet conglomerate Naver, WEBTOON’s parent company, recently acquired Wattpad in a transaction estimated at more than USD \$600M. The company says with a combined audience of more than 166 million, Wattpad WEBTOON Studios will create an innovative multi-format studio making global fan and data-driven TV shows, films, and books. Naver will commit USD \$100M in development and production financing. After launching and building the Wattpad Studios brand since 2017, Aron Levitz will step into the role of President of Wattpad WEBTOON Studios. Taylor Grant will lead the WEBTOON entertainment portfolio, Eric Lehrman will lead the Wattpad entertainment portfolio, Ashleigh Gardner will continue to lead all aspects of publishing, and Dexter Ong will lead international business.

YuppTV, a leading OTT platform for South Asian content, has launched SonyLIV in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the UK, Europe, and the Middle East. Viewers will be able to watch a wide range of content in multiple languages, including Originals, TV shows and movies in various genres. YuppTV has also launched Zee Network channels in the U.S. and Canada offering a mix of fiction, non-fiction, marquee events and blockbuster movies in Hindi & regional languages. Users will get access to channels including Zee TV, & TV and Zee Cinema as well as regional channels like Zee Telugu, Zee Tamil, Zee Kannada, Zee Keralam, Zee Punjabi, Zee Marathi and Zee Bangla.

Media Technology Monitor (MTM) has released a new report focused on anglophones who have canceled their TV service (Cord Cutters) as well as Potential Cord Cutters, Cord Nevers (those who have never had

a paid TV subscription), and Cord Shavers (those who have reduced their subscription). The report found that one fifth of anglophones are Cord Cutters and more active online than the average TV subscriber with 71% subscribing to two or more SVOD services such as Netflix or Amazon Prime Video. They also tend to be younger and well educated. Close to a quarter of anglophone paid TV subscribers report they are “Very Likely” or “Somewhat Likely” to cancel their existing TV service. Anglophones are more likely than Francophones to fall into this category (23% versus 16%). 24% of anglophone paid TV subscribers identified as Cord Shavers and have reduced the number of channels they subscribe to within the last year. 14% of the anglophone population has never had a paid TV service, with many Cord Nevers forgoing services entirely.

Google Canada has signed agreements with Canadian publishers for Google News Showcase, a new product and licensing program that provides a customizable space for news content in Google News and Discover. Among the Canadian publishers signed are Black Press Media, Glacier Media, The Globe and Mail, Métro Média, Narcity Media, SaltWire Network, Village Media and Winnipeg Free Press, representing over 70 national, regional and community news outlets. As part of its licensing deals, Google will also pay news organizations for access to select paywalled content and help news outlets determine the right amount of content to share to help drive subscriptions. Google says it's in active conversations with additional publishers to expand the initiative.

CBC News says it will be continuing its pilot experiment that saw the public broadcaster close Facebook commenting across its News, Current Affairs and Local pages in June. CBC says after “encouraging initial results and positive feedback” from audiences and staff, the project will be extended through Oct. 31 of this year.

Niagara_411 LIVE, a weekly livestream on YouTube and Facebook, produced by St. Catharines-based WeeStream, is now in its second season. Hosted by broadcast veteran and former 610 CKTB personality Lee Sterry, WeeStream says the show averages between 30,000 and 40,000 views per episode and has been successful at drawing local sponsors. WeeStream co-founder Kevin Jack, also a CKTB alum, co-hosts from behind the camera. Streamed live from downtown St. Catharines, in addition to scheduled guests the show invites anyone to join via Zoom, much like open-line talk radio.