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Reality television and its effects on community involvement

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REALITY TELEVISION AND ITS EFFECTS ON COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Sociology

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Mary Zinkievich

December 2004

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ABSTRACT

REALITY TELEVISION AND ITS EFFECTS ON COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

by Mary Zinkievich

This is an exploratory study about reality TV and its possible effects on community involvement. Reality TV was chosen because this genre of television has drastically increased its popularity over the last few years simply by using real people to interact with each other in a carefully constructed competitive community. This study also had an interest in pinpointing a specific demographic that watches reality television. A survey was conducted with 61 randomly chosen residents of the Santa Cruz County. Although women were slightly more likely to say they watched reality TV, the overall results showed that there was no specific group of people that watched reality TV. There were some significant results regarding the relationship between watching reality TV and community involvement, however, these findings did not prove that people who watched reality TV were less likely to participate in community activities than those who did not watch reality TV.

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1. Introduction/Statement of Problem

Recently, something new has emerged from television programming that solidified the idea that people can still feel connected to others even when staying at home alone (Putnam, 2000; Slater, 1997). The concept of the reality television show started with such game shows as *The Price is Right* and *This is Your Life*, where real people were randomly chosen from the studio audience to create the show's atmosphere (Root, 1996). Using real people for television shows has now evolved from simple game shows into programs solely constructed by drama that occurs when groups of people are put together for a long period of time under challenging circumstances.

Reality TV is now a specific type of show in which real people are purposely chosen by the television producers to interact with each other in a carefully constructed environment. The people chosen are set up to perform certain tasks that encourage competition within the group. Such shows, as *Big Brother*, *Survivor*, and *Temptation Island* are prime examples of this new concept. In 2000, the Nielsen Ratings showed that these shows have elicited an unprecedented popularity among television viewers. For example, in its first season, *Survivor* had almost 30 million viewers (Reiss and Wiltz, 2001). People were religiously watching, getting to know the people involved, and waiting

with baited breath to see who would “lose” (this usually meant being rejected by the televised social group) and who would “win” (usually, the remaining person from the social group received a cash prize).

The following for such shows has become so great that products are being sold to the viewer so they may feel a part of the show. An example of this would be the “colors” that the *Survivor* teams (tribes) wear. Depending on which person the viewer follows on the show, he/she can wear a bandanna or t-shirt with that team’s colors in support of that person.

Because there has been very little research done on this new genre of TV, this project will be exploratory. There are many research questions to be answered within the reality TV genre; however, time constraints restrict this study to just a few. The first areas of interest were who watched reality-based television shows and the reasons they watched.

Once these two questions were answered within the limits of the data collected, the next question was whether watching reality-based shows decreased participation in community activities. There are many definitions of community, but for this project, the term community was defined as a group of people who interacted with each other to exchange common interests. To support the conceptual definition, the survey’s operational definition consisted

of community involvement questions: 1) how many clubs and/or organizations was one a member of in his or her community, 2) did the person vote, and 3) how often did one see and talk to people in his or her community (this includes friends, family and neighbors).

How this concept of community would manifest itself in the reality TV audience was an interesting focus for this study. Perhaps the community involvement questions would have less of an interest to the reality TV viewers because the viewers found other people to identify with on the reality TV shows. They would watch every week to see how a new scenario would unfold and reveal more about their “television friends” instead of interact with the people outside their home. Or, did reality TV viewers just prefer to spend their time discussing the shows with other viewers thus creating a separate community around the show?

From this curiosity about reality TV, several research questions arose: 1) did reality-based television create a new “virtual” community or did it create a community of reality-based fans? 2) did watching reality shows dampen a person’s interest in his/her own community? 3) if it did dampen their interest, why? and 4) did a person’s demographic background determine if he/she preferred reality TV to community involvement?

If reality TV has changed the way people interact within their communities, why did it occur with this type of show? Perhaps it is the reality TV program components of real people put into intimate situations that viewers find so interesting. Or perhaps it is the viewers themselves who belong to a culture that encourages them to be complacent and to spend their leisure time absorbed in a mindless activity that projects that culture's values back to the viewer (Thompson, 1964; Slater, 1997; Hoggart, 1977; Williams, 1985).

The American culture, which is consumer based, has helped to encourage a new community of reality TV viewers. In the United States, mass media, specifically television, has become a tool for capitalism to redefine leisure time into "consumption time" (Slater, 1997, p. 29). People were given television shows to watch in order to distract them from any public discourse that might lead to questioning capitalist industry. Therefore, a "synthetic substance that exists only in the media" was replacing social interactions (Thompson, 1964, p. 16). The innate desire to connect with others was still there but it evolved into sharing a common interest with others on television. Through the careful construction of real people placed in intimate and competitive environments, reality TV gave viewers other people to relate to and get to know. Social connectedness became not just neighbors who lived down the street but people

on television. Of course, neighbors were real, but now through reality-based television, there was that potential to feel just as connected to real people on the television screen as to people in the neighborhood because the people on the shows were sharing themselves with the viewers.

This concept was fascinating because it made one realize that there were other ways to connect with other human beings than just through face-to-face interaction. Because of the capitalist industry's need to placate its workers, it had created an easier, less time consuming way to make social connections. This discovery has now snowballed into the reality television program, which is essentially the fine tuned work of the corporations' need to keep the masses happy. Viewers can have a synthetic relationship with the people on television as well as join discussion groups that revolve around the people on the television.

2. Literature Review

Reality-based Television as Community

Bourdon (2000) revisited Kreiling's theme in his article "Live television is still alive: on television as an unfulfilled promise." (p. 533) The idea was that live broadcasting from the early days was "exalted as a way to conquer time and distance, to have vast groups of people commune in a new experience." (p. 533) He further explained that live television had the added attraction of the unexpected. People could watch a live show and hope for drama in situations that were not previously set up (although it may have been encouraged by television producers). Rapping (1987) also stated that nonfiction television had a more potent effect on viewers because the shows contained these unexpected, emotionally charged, truth-based situations (p. 11).

Even though Bourdon's article about live broadcasting was quite recent (2000), he did not include in his analysis the new explosion of reality-based television shows. His main focus was on documentaries and news channels. Despite this shortcoming, Bourdon, along with Kreiling (1982) and Rapping (1987), inadvertently touched on the aspect of reality television that was presented in this paper. People were a part of a larger community simply by watching their television sets and connecting to the real people that were

broadcast. Emotional connections could be made very easily when watching someone who is believed to be a real person. The televised person's life is put under a microscope by conducting in depth interviews and showing the person under difficult circumstances that reveal who that person is. Others did not easily see this as a benefit and the value of television entertainment came under quite a bit of criticism.

The underlying concept of each show was the same, to use real people and put them into a competitive environment and let the drama of real life relationships develop. Although the plots may seem different (for instance, one is a race across the globe, another is to survive in the wilderness), the overall meaning was the same (bear your soul to the viewer, manipulate other players, and above all, win the cash!). Going back to Hall's (1997) perspective, we could understand and get meaning from these shows, and yet, they pull us in despite ourselves. Hall believed this phenomenon occurred with any media image because the production of it revolved around the viewer and the fantasy relationship that existed between the viewer and the television. Rapping (1987) also stated something along similar lines: "They (nonfiction TV programs) have an imaginative and emotional power that is bolstered by their apparent truthfulness and the supposedly realizable fantasies they engender" (1987, p. 11).

While Fetveit (1999) in his article "Reality TV in the digital era: a paradox in visual culture?" quoted Robins (1996) discussing the popularity of reality TV as "anticipating, ahead of any technological transformation, the experience of....virtual-reality systems" (p. 121-2). Its attraction was that it "combines entertainment and thrills with comfort and security" (p. 122).

This power to entice and delight, despite our own admitted disgust with the show's intellectual and moral value, has occurred quite often in the course of television history. Other shows have emerged throughout the years that have elicited the same magnitude of popularity as reality-based shows. Many of these include: soap operas (day-time and prime-time) like *Days of Our Lives* and *Dallas*, game shows like *The Price Is Right* and *Wheel of Fortune* and talk shows such as *The Jerry Springer Show* and *The Oprah Winfrey Show*.

Reality-based shows have so much in common with these other genres. In fact, they were a combination of all three: part game show, part soap opera, and part talk show. They brought to the viewer a perfect mix that offered something for everyone. They all used real people instead of actors to produce the show. Real people add that dual sense of unexpectedness with familiarity. The contestants on reality shows such as *Survivor* or *Big Brother* lasted a bit longer than on regular game shows, so the viewer had a chance to know them better, to

learn about who they “really” were. The shows also had a “host” who acted as a facilitator or mediator. For game shows and reality shows, these hosts were there to instruct the contestants about the rules of the game, however, on reality shows, their role was a bit more emotional at times. In order to increase the drama of the show and to help the viewers get to know the contestants, the hosts would discuss with the contestants their feelings about the show’s development. Talk shows had this sense of heightened drama, however, the people changed on each show, so viewers did not become attached to any particular person. Finally, all three genres reported an incredibly high number of viewers (Nielsen Media Research, 1998). Especially for soap operas, talk shows and game shows, most viewers were women, because they enjoyed that aspect of getting to know the people more so than did men (Harrington and Bielby, 1995).

The huge audience that the reality-based shows were pulling in has put them under the sociological microscope. Why do people watch “reality TV”? Several articles seemed to echo the initial plan of the capitalist industry to create a consumer culture of synthetic people and things that could entertain and distract the masses. Reiss and Wiltz (2001) found that fans of reality-based shows such as *Survivor*, were more competitive than other viewers and that they were also more status conscious than people who watched other types of television

shows (p. 52). The competitiveness and status consciousness supported the ideologies of capitalism and the American culture, however, they tried to refute the idea that people watched reality TV in order to be involved in the following day's discussion about it at work (p. 52). Therefore, they agreed that reality TV was a product of consumer culture, but they did not think it gave people a sense of belonging or community. Sardar (2000) had another take on why these shows were so popular and that was "voyeuristic television makes people the ultimate commodity" (p. 26). Miller (2000) and Larsen (2001) would also agree that this was an attractive aspect of the reality-based shows.

This project was an exploratory study that looked at why reality based shows created a sense of community or belonging to its viewers and how that community feeling existed during and after the shows. Along with this agenda, this study tried to discover if there was a specific group of people who watched reality based shows and if so, why. Finally, this study described the positive aspects of reality-based television and why it might be the future of television entertainment.

Identity, Television, and Community

The idea that television was a tool used by consumerism was certainly not a new concept (Schor, 1998; Slater, 1997). However, a new twist was added to this partnership between consumerism and television and that was the notion that through a specific type of television genre, reality-based television, members of the consumer culture have an alternate choice to their desired identity. Not only was it a different choice that was offered to the viewer/consumer, but also it was a more in depth and complex choice. People were no longer identifying with actors who endorsed products in a thirty-second commercial; they were given real people to watch and use as a product.

Kellner (1995) explained that, before modern society, we received our sense of identity from the community in which we lived. Identity was a fixed title that had specific appropriate behaviors attached to it, such as "hunter." This sense of identity remained the same throughout that community. Now, Kellner (1995) argued that we must find other ways to identify ourselves because that type of stable, predictable, long-term community no longer existed in post-modernity. One found that sense of identity through many different ways, television, however, had become the most convenient way to do this.

Slater (1995) used the concept of the “other-directed self” in which we found our identities or personalities by being extremely “sensitive to the actions and wishes of others so that the individual could be “at home everywhere and nowhere, capable of a rapid if sometimes superficial intimacy and response to everyone” (p. 90). Slater also used Giddens (1991) to further support his point about “other-directedness” by saying that one could become so overly concerned about receiving and maintaining good opinions from others, that one became “self-obsessed” (p. 91). Consumerism helped to perpetuate this obsession by constantly offering the latest and greatest products to help gain more approval from peers (Slater, 1997; Giddens, 1991). This type of obsession was compared to narcissism, although instead of being obsessed with one’s self, one was obsessed with how others think of oneself.

According to Lasch (1979), narcissism was the key to consumer behavior because it “reduces individuals to interchangeable objects that relate to each other as pure objects (things that can potentially gratify the needs of the self)” (p. 42). This supposition was strictly in terms of face-to-face, real encounters. How then could this be looked at in terms of viewers of reality-based television? Consider Root’s (1986) statement about how a real person’s job “is to be just like those watching, to act as viewers momentarily whisked to the other side of the

screen" (p. 97). As viewers, we expected to see people like ourselves and therefore, people who validated who we were. That was where the self-gratification lay. Reality TV viewers as well have received that validation by watching who they believed were similar to them because the people on the shows are labeled as "real" (Reiss and Wiltz, 2001).

To take this a bit further, consider Slater's (1997) theory about "pseudo-individuals" on television. Slater (1997) reported that many blue-collar workers could only express their individuality through television use. These workers had so many different types of "pseudo-individuals" (Slater, 1997, p. 121) to choose from to help them create an identity that offered pure entertainment as well as much needed distraction from "capitalist realities" (Slater, 1997, p. 121). The idea of "pseudo-individuals" and how consumers use them was crucial to this research paper because it would help to explain why reality television has become so popular in this society.

The people we decided to look at on television were, in essence, commodities because the image of the person was being bought by the television viewer/consumer (Sardar, 2000). But what was the meaning behind people as commodities? Were they just vehicles for consumerism like any other object that was used on television? Perhaps yes, because by their familiar image, they were

more effective in selling products. On the other hand, as previously stated by Slater, they were primary sources for identity to the consumer. Even a third option would be to look back at what Kellner (1995) discussed; we focused on others to give us our sense of self, our sense of belonging and watching people on television made us feel like we belonged to something bigger.

Reality-based television was actually offering a combination of all three of these theories. Viewers were buying what was seen on these shows, the products (wearing the tribe colors for instance), the identities presented, and the relationships that unfolded throughout the season. The consumption of these was mainly shown by how the viewers pursued a sense of belonging with other viewers by presenting situations that provoked public discourse (Reiss and Wiltz, 2001). An example of this are the many chat rooms that exist on-line for each reality show so viewers can talk with each other.

Besides Slater's work on consumer culture (1997), there has been quite an extensive amount of literature about technology and its use as a tool versus its use as pure entertainment. There have been more positive perspectives on "new media technologies", one of which was presented by Kreiling (1982) in his article entitled "Television in American Ideological Hopes and Fears." This article discussed the idea that the media, as an informative tool, was going to be the key

to creating a "Great Community" (p. 199) because Americans, by their innate nature, were more interested in constructing a community in the present instead of building it on past beliefs and values. Kreiling (1982) believed that the "new technologies" would aid in the spread of a "new culture of enlightenment" (p. 200).

Many researchers have been successful in studying popular television shows and their viewers. Reigel (1996) talked about soap operas and why they attracted such a huge audience. Her hypothesis was that the complex levels of gossip that occurred in and around a soap opera was the driving force for its popularity (p. 201). Reality-based shows, such as *Temptation Island* and *Survivor*, also had levels of gossip within and around the show. People on the show were actively gossiping about each other in order to gain an edge over someone else. People watching the show, could also see the contestants gossip about each other. It gave an extra insight into the people on the shows.

Hall's theory of television as a looking glass into one's own fantasy life has come into fruition with reality TV shows. Viewers liked to watch because it gives viewers an experience vicariously through others. This can be fun and addicting because viewers can feel a part of the activity (Strinati, 1995).

Harrington and Bielby (1995) also studied the subculture of soap fans and why normal, productive people become soap addicts. Because soap operas were considered to be low on the totem pole of television hierarchy, they wanted to find out why people were still watching them and even willingly identifying themselves as soap fans. They found that soap fans received a very personal and private pleasure from being an active member of this subculture. According to their survey, 76% of their respondents claimed that they preferred to watch their favorite soap operas alone because only then did they have the emotional freedom to respond to what was happening on the show (Harrington and Bielby, p. 23). This type of pleasure was not entirely isolating, Harrington and Bielby argued, because they (fans) could relate and understand each other through this common sense of pleasure.

The distorted view of social reality that soap operas offered to their viewers was meant to also give viewers a sense of emotional attachment that they could get no where else. Viewers were even including this world in their own identities. While reality shows such as *Survivor* and *Temptation Island* do have loyal fan bases, it had not elevated to the fanaticism of soap operas, perhaps because reality TV has not been around as long as soap operas. However, there are fan clubs for contestants of reality shows just like soap opera actors. Right

now, reality shows contestants do not last as long as characters on a soap opera, so a viewer cannot become too attached to them. It was as if people became a mere snapshot of their true selves. Another important reason that these shows did not have an organized, long standing fan base was that the shows were so short and the element of the game show was quite prevalent. Therefore, one could go to *Toys-R-Us* and buy the *Survivor* game, but not the *Days of Our Lives* game (because it would last a lifetime!).

3. Method

The Sample

The data used for this study was collected by mailing questionnaires to 200 Santa Cruz County residents. These residents were randomly chosen in the 2003 Santa Cruz County phonebook by using a computer-generated, random numbers table created by Craig Zinkievich (please see Appendix A). Of the 200 surveys that were mailed, 31 were completed and returned. Although these 31 surveys provided pertinent information to this study, it was necessary to conduct phone interviews in order to get more detailed information regarding the reasons why people watched reality-based television shows. Therefore, an additional 30 respondents were randomly chosen from the Santa Cruz County 2002 phone book for phone interviews and were asked the same questions as the respondents for the mailed questionnaires. Participants were encouraged to explain in more detail why they chose their answers. Prompting from an interviewer was expected to help the participants elaborate more on their opinions, unlike the mailed survey respondents who did not have encouragement from an interviewer.¹

¹ It should be noted also that before any data was collected, an application was submitted to the Human Subjects Review Board of San Jose State University on February 6, 2002. Permission was granted by the HSRB on March 8, 2002 to conduct the study during the time period of March 8, 2002 and March 7, 2003 (see Appendix F).

Informed Consent

Attached to each questionnaire was an "agreement to participate in research" form (please see Appendix B). Each participant signed this form before answering any of the survey questions. In the case of the phone interviews, where it would be impossible to obtain a signature, each participant simply gave their verbal consent after the interviewer read the consent form to him/her. All participants were informed that the information they provided would be completely confidential.

The Survey

An eighteen-question survey was designed for this study to determine whether there was a relationship between watching reality TV and community participation (see Appendix B for the actual survey used). Six were questions about television and reality television viewing habits and opinions, and six others pertained to community involvement. One question asked the participant to choose between television and community involvement and the rest of the questions were asked for demographic purposes (See Appendix B). The first part of the survey began with questions about TV and reality TV viewing. These questions were used in the beginning to get the respondent immediately engaged in the topic of reality TV. The first question asked was,

"How many hours a week do you watch television?" The responses available were: a) 0-5; b) 6-10; c) 11-15; d) 16-20; e) 21-25; f) 26-30; g) 31-35 and h) over 35 hours per week. The responses were then coded 1 through 8 (i.e. 0-5 received a 1, 6-10 received a 2 and so forth). The second question asked whether the participant was currently watching or had ever watched a reality-based television show. This was a yes or no response, and yes received a 1, while no received a 0. The third question was to be answered only if the participant answered yes to question 2. The question was, "How often do you watch reality based television?" The choices were on a Likert type scale: a) rarely; b) sometimes; c) frequently and d) all the time. These responses were coded 1 (rarely) through 4 (all the time).

The fourth question was a more in depth question because it asked the participant to rate several (given) reasons as to why he/she watched reality-based television. The respondents were asked to rate each reason from 1 (the best reason) to 5 (the least likely reason). The nine reasons were: 1) there's nothing else on at the time, 2) getting to know the people on the show, 3) the competitions are very exciting, 4) the discussion it creates after the show with family and friends, 5) the discussion it creates with other people in my community, 6) the drama that occurs among the group members on the show, 7)

feeling a connection with specific contestants and hoping that they win, 8) like to think about how you would do as a contestant, and 9) other, please specify. This question was used to determine whether viewers felt a connection with the people on the show (reasons 2, 6 and 7), used the show to connect with other viewers through discussion (reason 4 and 5), or perhaps did both.

To follow up the idea of whether reality TV was isolating or not, the fifth question asked the participant whether he/she preferred to watch reality based television alone (coded 0) or with others (coded 1). The participants were also asked to briefly explain their choice. This question was used to further investigate the question whether reality TV was isolating or it encouraged group interaction. For instance, perhaps the participant, who watched reality TV alone, did so because he/she wanted to focus on just the people on the TV show. On the other hand, perhaps participants who stated that they watched reality TV with others did so because they liked using the show as a basis for discussion with other people. Question six asked whether the participant discussed reality based shows with others and the response choice was either "Yes" (coded as 1) or "No" (coded as 0), with a brief explanation. Again, this was to further investigate whether participants had a connection with other people through watching reality-based television.

The next set of questions was about community involvement. These were asked to gain information about how involved the respondent was in his/her community. The seventh question was whether or not the participant belonged to any clubs and/or organizations (including church), and this was also coded as yes=1 and no=0. This was asked to find out how many responsibilities the respondent had in his/her community. Question eight was a follow up question to seven by asking approximately how many clubs and/or organizations the participant currently belonged to and the choices for this were: a) 1-3; b) 4-6 and c) more than 6. The responses were coded 1-3 respectively. Question nine asked if the participant voted. This was a simple yes or no response (yes coded as 1, no coded as 0) that also helped to indicate the participants' community connections.

Question ten was a forced choice in that the participant was asked to choose between watching the season finale of a reality based television show such as Survivor or go to a very important town meeting. The participants were also asked to explain their choice. This question was used to show which type of connection to people was more important to the participant. It was meant to help answer the question, was the participant more likely to choose "real" people on television or real people in his/her community?

The next set of questions was also about the respondent's activity within his/her community. Question eleven asked how often the participant recognized and talked to people in his/her local supermarket. On a Likert type scale, the participant was offered the choices of never (coded as 1), rarely (coded as 2), sometimes (coded as 3), frequently (coded as 4) and all the time (coded as 5). This was asked to look at how often the participant interacted with people in a common community atmosphere. Question twelve asked how often the participant visited friends and family in the local area. The same Likert type scale as question eleven was used with the same codes. This was also used to see how well the participant interacted with others outside the home. Question thirteen asked, "How often do you talk to your neighbors?" The choices were again the same as in question eleven and twelve as well as the coding. Again, this question was used to determine participants' interaction with their immediate community.

Questions fourteen through eighteen were asked for demographic purposes. These were asked to find a possible commonality among reality TV viewers. Question fourteen was about gender or sex. Males were coded as 1, and females were coded as 0. Question fifteen asked employment status. Full time received a 1, part time received a 2, unemployed received a 3 and other

(usually retired or self-employed) received a 4 in the coding process. Question sixteen asked the age of the participant. Participants could choose among these categories: a) 18-24; b) 25-34; c) 35-44; d) 45-54 and e) over 55. These choices were coded 1 through 5 respectively. Question seventeen asked the ethnicity of the participant. Choices for this were: a) Caucasian, b) African-American, c) Asian American/Pacific Islander, d) Latino-American and e) Other not specified. The data was coded as Caucasian=1, African-American=2, Asian-American/Pacific Islander=3, Latin American=4 and Other, specify=5. Last, question eighteen asked the approximate household annual income. The categories were a) \$0-\$14,999; b) \$15,000- \$29,999; c) \$30,000- \$44,999; d) \$45,000- \$59,999; e) \$60,000-\$74,999 and f) over \$75,000. These were coded 1-6 respectively.

Within the questionnaire, there were two specific themes. The first theme was community involvement and the questions under this heading were:

1. Do you currently belong to any clubs or organizations?
2. How many clubs?
3. Do you vote?
4. How often do you recognize and talk to people in your local supermarket?
5. How often do you visit friends and family who live near you?

6. How often do you talk to neighbors?

The other theme was reality TV viewing and participation, which included the questions:

1. Do you now or have you ever watched a reality TV show?
2. How often do you watch reality TV shows?
3. Please rate the possible reasons why you watch reality TV.
4. Do you prefer to watch reality TV shows alone or with others?
5. Do you or have you ever discussed reality TV shows with others?

Crosstabulations were used to look at these two groups of variables.

There were also crosstabulations done with the demographic variables and the reality TV viewing variables. The phone and mail surveys were first analyzed separately and subsequently together.

4. Results

This research began with the idea that the relatively new television genre, reality TV, has transformed a person's sense of belonging to a group. Do people who watch reality-based TV watch it because the shows give them a sense of community? Do they feel like they are a part of the reality TV show because they are pulled into other people's personal lives? Or perhaps, the viewers feel a connectedness with other reality TV viewers because they can discuss the show's outcomes. Furthermore, if this genre of television is providing some new sense of community for individuals, does it stand to reason that social interaction in one's own community will decrease? One of this project's most important research questions was about whether watching reality TV would replace a person's need for social interaction in his/her community.

The reports on community participation of those who watched reality TV were compared to those who did not watch reality TV. It turned out for this particular sample of people, that reality based television was not an activity that was isolating for the individual; on the contrary, it enhanced a person's social world. People who watched this particular genre of television, relished discussing the outcomes with other people, especially friends and family. They also reported that they enjoyed watching the people on the shows and getting to

know them as the show progressed. However, it did not affect their participation in their own community. The respondents' answers to the community-based questions had a very small connection to their reality TV viewing. Perhaps people are just expanding their sense of community by incorporating the people they viewed on the television with the real world. Looking at the area that this sample was taken (Santa Cruz County), perhaps community involvement is too important to these residents, so they do not even compare it to television viewing.

Demographics

A survey was mailed out to 200 residents of the Santa Cruz County. Of those mailed, 31 were returned, even after follow-up postcards were mailed. The same survey was also conducted over the phone with 30 Santa Cruz county residents. In total, there were 61 usable surveys for this study. To begin, the following is a brief comparison between the telephone and mail surveys' demographics.

Sex and age were the first variables compared. The breakdown for sex was similar between the mail and phone surveys. Of the phone surveys, there were an equal number of men and women who responded (15). For the mail surveys, there were 18 females and 13 males that responded. For age, however,

the surveys differed slightly. In the phone surveys, the highest percentage was in the category of 25-34 year olds (26.7%). This was followed by the over 55 category and the 45-54 year olds (see Table 1 below). The percentages in mail surveys for the same variable, age, the highest percentage (41.9%) of respondents was the over 55 year olds, followed by the 45-54 year olds (see Table 2 below).

Table 1: Age of Phone Survey Respondents²

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
18-24	4	13.3	13.3	13.3
25-34	8	26.7	26.7	40.0
35-44	5	16.7	16.7	56.7
45-54	6	20.0	20.0	76.7
Over 55	7	23.3	23.3	100.0

Table 2: Age of Mail Survey Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
18-24	2	6.5	6.7	6.7
25-34	5	16.1	16.7	23.3
35-44	3	9.7	10.0	33.3
45-54	7	22.6	23.3	56.7
Over 55	13	41.9	43.3	100.0
No response	1	3.2		

² For each of the tables listed, frequency is the number of respondents within each category. Percent is the number created by multiplying the proportion of respondents by 100. The valid percent is the percentage of actual respondents once the missing values are excluded. The cumulative percent is the percentage of respondents in the sample at or below the value within each category.

As for the ethnicity of the respondents for the phone surveys, slightly over 90% reported being Caucasian. None were African-American, one was Asian American/Pacific Islander, one was Latin/American and one chose not to state their ethnicity. As for the mailed surveys, there were an overwhelming number of Caucasian respondents (80.6%), however 9.7% were Latin American and another 9.7% stated other ethnicity. (See Tables 3 and 4). It should be noted however, that the other ethnicity chosen by the three respondents in table 4, was Mexican.

Table 3: Ethnicity for Phone Survey Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Caucasian	27	90.0	93.1	93.1
Asian American/ Pacific Islander	1	3.3	3.4	96.6
Latin American	1	3.3	3.4	100.0
No response	1	3.3		

Table 4: Ethnicity for Mail Survey Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Caucasian	25	80.6	80.6	80.6
Latin American	3	9.7	9.7	90.3
Other, please specify	3	9.7	9.7	100.0

Full time employment was the primary employment status for the respondents in both the mail and phone surveys (see Table 5 and 6). The results were different between the two surveys within the rest of the employment status category. For the phone survey respondents, there were almost twice as many part time employees as the mail survey respondents (23.3% vs. 12.9%). For the category, unemployment, there were more than three times as many respondents in the phone surveys as in the mail survey respondents (10.0% vs. 3.2%). The last category (other) was the option to state some other employment status other than full, part or self-employed. The majority of respondents in this category were retired, with a few claiming either motherhood or self-employment.

Table 5: Employment Status for Mail Survey Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Full time	13	41.9	41.9	41.9
Part time	4	12.9	12.9	54.8
Unemployed	1	3.2	3.2	58.1
Other	13	41.9	41.9	100.0

Table 6: Employment Status for Phone Survey Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Full time	13	43.3	43.3	43.3
Part time	7	23.3	23.3	66.7
Unemployed	3	10.0	10.0	76.7
Other	7	23.3	23.3	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

For income (see Tables 7 and 8 following), the mail and phone surveys were so alike in this category with the highest percentage of people in the last category, over \$75,000 as household income.

Table 7: Income for Mail Survey Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
\$0-14,999	4	12.9	12.9	12.9
15,000-29,999	5	16.1	16.1	29.0
30,000-44,999	6	19.4	19.4	48.4
45,000-59,999	1	3.2	3.2	51.6
60,000-74,999	5	16.1	16.1	67.7
Over 75,000	10	32.3	32.3	100.0
Total	31	100.0	100.0	

Table 8: Income for Phone Survey Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
\$0-14,999	2	6.7	6.7	6.7
15,000-29,999	5	16.7	16.7	23.3
30,000-44,999	2	6.7	6.7	30.0
45,000-59,999	5	16.7	16.7	46.7
60,000-74,999	4	13.3	13.3	60.0
Over 75,000	12	40.0	40.0	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

The overall demographics of both the mail and phone respondents were extremely similar and the similarity remains throughout the rest of the questions as well (see Appendix C). Since the data was so comparable, and the differences that were found were not considered critical enough to affect the outcomes, the results of both surveys will be combined in the next section where crosstabulations were used for statistical analyses.

To summarize, this sample was mostly Caucasian, between the ages of 25-34 or over 55. The majority held full time employment that earned them over \$75,000 per year per household. Now that the sample has been loosely defined, another important goal of this paper was to look at those respondents who reported that they watched reality TV and find out whether there were common

trends in the reality TV group responses. Not only was the goal to find out whether these specific respondents had less interest in community involvement than those who did not report watching reality TV, but it was also this paper's intention to find out if there were any specific demographics that played a part in respondents' reports of reality TV viewing.

Reality TV Viewers

First, the crosstabulations that showed significant relationships between reality TV viewing and community involvement are shown below. Table 9 (see below), the variables “Do you watch reality TV?” and “Which would you choose to go to, a town meeting or a season finale?” were used. Of course, those who stated that they did not watch reality TV stated overwhelmingly that they would attend the town meeting. The chi square value was 6.373, $df=1$, $n=56$, $p=.012$. Because this was significant, the strength of the relationship was done using phi. The phi value was .337, which unfortunately, showed only a moderate relationship between these two variables.

Table 9: Crosstabulation of the Variables Do you watch reality TV? and Choose Between Watching the Season Finale of Your Favorite Reality TV Show or Attending a Very Important Community Event Such as a Town Meeting.

		Which would you choose to do?		Total
		Town meeting	Season finale	
Do you watch reality TV?s	No	23 (95.8%)	1 (4.2%)	24 (100%)
	Yes	22 (68.8%)	10 (31.3%)	32 (100%)
	Total	45 (80.4%)	11 (19.6%)	56 (100%)

chi square= 6.373, $df=1$, $n=56$, $p=.012$

Graph 1: Reality TV Viewing and the Choice Between Town Meeting or Season Finale

To follow up on the information shown in Table 9, Table 10 (see next page) shows the variables “which would you choose to go to, town meeting or season finale?” and “how often do you watch reality TV?” These two variables also had a significant relationship (chi square was 11.131, df=3, n=32, p=.011) The strength of the relationship was even stronger than the previous two variables used in table 9 (phi value was .590). The respondents who stated that they watched reality TV all the time were less likely to say that they would go to a town meeting than those who reported only frequent reality TV viewing (see Graph 2 on next page). Conversely, those respondents who stated that they rarely watched reality TV, were more likely to state that they would attend the

town meeting instead of stay home and watch the season finale of a reality TV show. Many of the respondents who reported that they watched reality TV all the time explained that a season finale of their favorite reality show, such as *Survivor*, was just too important to miss. One specific respondent even reported that nine out of ten times, she would choose to go to the town meeting, but because the survey question stated that it was a season finale reality show, she would choose to stay home to watch the show.

Table 10: Crosstabulation of the Variables How Often do You Watch Reality TV? and Choose Between Watching the Season Finale of Your Favorite Reality TV Show or Attending a Very Important Community Event Such as a Town Meeting.

		Which would you choose to do?		Total
		Town meeting	Season finale	
How often do you watch reality TV?	Rarely	9 (100%)	0 (0%)	9 (100%)
	Sometimes	9 (69.2%)	4 (30.8%)	13 (100%)
	Frequently	4 (57.1%)	3 (42.9%)	7 (100%)
	All the time	0 (0%)	3 (100%)	3 (100%)
	Total	22 (68.8%)	10 (31.3%)	32

chi square= 11.131, df=3, n=32, p=.011

Graph 2: The Choice Between Town Meeting or Season Finale and How Often Reality TV is Watched

The above graph, not only describes the quantitative data that was collected, but also the open-ended questions. In the subjective part of the survey, many respondents stated that they preferred community involvement to any type of TV, including reality TV. However, the very dedicated reality TV viewers stated they just could not miss a season finale. One respondent even said she would send her husband to the town meeting (if it was that important) so she could stay home to watch the show. The majority of these comments were taken from question 10, which asked which event was more important, a reality TV show season finale or a town meeting. The overall consensus within this

group was that community (i.e., the people around them) as opposed to television (people they watch) had a direct effect on their lives.

Table 11 below shows the relationship between “What is your sex?” and “Do you discuss reality TV shows with others?” Over 95% of the women stated they discussed reality TV shows with others and only over half of the men said they did. This is a significant relationship between sex and reality TV viewing with moderate strength (phi value was -.507). Women chose to interact with other people after watching the show much more than men did. Reality TV encouraged them to socialize with others within their community by giving them a topic to discuss.

Table 11: Crosstabulation of the Variables Sex and Do You Discuss Reality TV Shows with Others.

		Do you discuss reality TV shows with others?		Total
		No	Yes	
What is your sex?	Female	1 (4.3%)	22 (95.7%)	23 (100%)
	Male	7 (46.7%)	8 (53.3%)	15 (100%)
	Total	8 (21.1%)	30 (78.9%)	38 (100%)

Chi square= 9.783, df= 1, n= 38, p= .002, Phi= -.507

Graph 3, above, shows the overwhelming number of women who reported discussing reality TV shows. Almost all of the women (95.7%) who watched reality TV said that the discussion afterwards was important to them. Only half of the men, on the other hand, said that they discussed reality TV.

Since the above tables and graphs show the only significant relationships within this sample, the second half of these crosstabulations contain the non-significant relationships found between the demographic questions with the reality TV questions as well as the community involvement questions. The designated reality TV questions were as follows:

1. Do you now or have you ever watched reality-based television shows such as *Survivor*, *Big Brother*, *Amazing Race*, or *Temptation Island*?
2. If the answer to the previous question was yes, how often do you watch reality-based television?
3. On a scale of 1-5, please rate the following possible reasons why you watch reality-based television;
 - a. There's nothing else on at the time.
 - b. Getting to know the people on the show.
 - c. The competitions are very exciting.
 - d. The discussion it creates after the show with family and friends.
 - e. The discussion it creates with other people in my community.
 - f. The drama that occurs among the group members on the show.
 - g. Feeling a connection with specific contestants and hoping they win.
 - h. Like to think about how you would do as a contestant.
 - i. Other (please specify).
4. Do you prefer to watch reality-based shows alone or with others?
5. Do you or have you ever-discussed reality-based shows with others?

The community involvement questions asked how active the respondent was in his or her community:

1. Do you currently belong to any clubs or organizations?
2. If the answer to the previous questions was yes, how many?
3. Do you vote?
4. How often do you recognize and talk to people in your local supermarket?
5. How often do you visit friends or family who live near you?
6. How often do you talk to your neighbors?

The demographics for this sample were age, sex, income, employment status, and ethnicity. These particular variables described the respondents and were used to determine if there was a certain type of person who watched reality TV.

Table 12 shows that there was only one significant relationship between the reality TV questions and the demographics of this sample (also see Table 11). Interestingly, women reported only slightly more often than men that they watched reality TV, however, they discussed the shows much more than the men did. Since the analysis of the demographics in this sample did not shed any light

on the subject of who watches reality TV, the sample was examined in terms of how reality TV viewing affected community activity.

Table 12: Breakdown of Pearson Chi Square Values and p Values for Non-Significant Demographic and Reality TV Variables

	Do you watch reality TV alone or with others?	Do you watch reality TV?	Do you discuss reality TV shows with others?	How often do you watch reality TV?
Sex	Chi square= 1.172 P= .279	Chi square= 3.696 P=.055	Chi square= 9.783 P= .002	Chi square= 5.731 P= .125
Age	Chi square= 5.297 P= .258	Chi square= 6.752 P= .150	Chi square= 5.636 P= .228	Chi square= 10.557 P= .567
Income	Chi square= 7.751 P= .170	Chi square= 6.555 P= .256	Chi square= 5.467 P= .362	Chi square= 11.151 P= .742
Ethnicity	Chi square= 4.623 P= .202	Chi square= 4.844 P= .184	Chi square= .595 P= .897	Chi square= 8.031 P= .531
Employment status	Chi square= 1.374 P= .712	Chi square= 1.543 P= .672	Chi square= 1.141 P= .767	Chi square= 12.683 P= .177

One of the research questions in the beginning was whether watching reality TV affected community participation, so that became the next focus for examination. Of those respondents who said that they watched reality TV, their level of community participation was reviewed. From looking at Table 13, the crosstabulation of the reality TV variables and the community involvement variables, shows that the data gathered did not support one of the original

hypotheses of this paper. The original hypothesis was that people who reported that they watched reality TV were less likely to participate in community activities than those who reported that they didn't watch reality TV (for example, club membership). Despite reality TV viewing, community involvement remained the same.

Table 13: Breakdown of the Pearson Chi Square Values and p Values for the Reality TV Variables and the Community Involvement Variables

	Do you watch reality TV?	How often do you watch reality TV?
Do you vote?	Chi square= 1.417 P=.234	Chi square= 3.556 P= .314
Do you belong to any clubs?	Chi square= 1.009 P= .315	Chi square= 3.705 P= .295
How many clubs?	Chi square= 1.150 P= .563	Chi square= 2.708 P= .439
How often do you speak to people in your supermarket?	Chi square= 3.395 P= .494	Chi square= 9.502 P= .660
How often do you visit friends and family?	Chi square= 4.270 P= .371	Chi square= 6.510 P= .688
How often do you speak to your neighbors?	Chi square= 1.230 P= .873	Chi square= 7.930 P= .791

Instead of showing redundant information about each community involvement question, one was chosen as an example to represent all community involvement questions. Using the question do you belong to any clubs or organizations as this example, graph 3, on the next page, shows a visual

depiction of how reality TV viewing did not have an effect on whether a person was active in community activities.

Although there were not as many significant relationships within the crosstabulations as were expected, there were still relationships found to support the hypothesis that reality TV viewing affected some areas of community activity. The fact that females enjoyed discussing reality shows with others supported the idea that reality shows promoted a sense of community among the

viewers. The variables "Do you watch reality TV?" and "Which would you choose to go to, a town meeting or a season finale?" also showed that reality TV affected its viewer's sense of community. Respondents could not miss the season finale of their favorite reality TV show even if it meant they would miss a very important town meeting. This was even truer with the respondents who watched reality TV all the time. For the respondents who devoted more time to reality TV viewing, actual community ties were not as important as the reality TV show season finale.

Lastly, the question that asked the respondents to rank their reasons for watching reality TV was examined. Using the independent variable, "How often do you watch reality TV?", the means of each reason are described in Table 14 on the following page.

Table 14: Comparing Means Using the Variables How Often do you Watch Reality TV? and Rank the Reasons for Watching Reality TV

How often do you watch reality TV?		There's nothing else on at the time	Getting to know the people on the show	The competitions are very exciting	The discussion it creates after the show with family and friends	The discussion it creates with other people in my community	The drama that occurs among the group members on the show	Feeling a connection with specific contestants and hoping that they win	Like to think about how you would do as a contestant
Rarely	Mean	4.14	5.44	6.00	5.44	5.22	4.78	6.00	5.78
	N	7	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
Sometimes	Mean	3.08	3.69	3.54	2.69	4.15	3.69	3.62	3.77
	N	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13
Frequently	Mean	4.40	3.43	3.71	3.71	5.71	1.29	3.29	4.43
	N	5	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
All the time	Mean	4.00	2.00	5.25	3.25	5.00	4.25	3.00	4.50
	N	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Total	Mean	3.67	3.91	4.45	3.73	4.88	3.55	4.12	4.55
	N	27	33	33	33	33	33	33	33

Table 14 shows how each respondent who watched reality TV responded to the reasons for watching reality TV. This table was looked at in terms of the lowest mean score in each category in order to decide the most likely reason for watching reality TV. Since the reasons are ranked 1-5, one being the most likely reason and 5 being the least likely reason, the lower the score for that reason means that more respondents ranked it as the most likely reason they watched reality TV. For those respondents that said they rarely watched reality TV, the mean number was 4.14 for the reason, there's nothing else on at the time. This is not surprising, since the respondents who rarely watched reality TV would have no reason showing long term viewing relationships. The next category, which was those that reported they sometimes watch reality TV, showed that the most likely reason for viewing was the discussion it created with family and friends after the show (mean was 2.69). The next category of frequent viewers of reality TV showed the most likely reason was watching the drama that occurs among the group members on the show (mean was 1.29). Finally, the last category, which was viewers who watched reality TV all the time, showed the most likely reason to be, getting to know the people on the show (mean was 2.00). This table was very important in showing how people did become more invested in the social aspect of these shows the more they watched them. Not only did they

watch in order to have interaction with others around them, but they also enjoyed watching the social interaction that was displayed on the television show.

This type of show seemed to have a necessary discussion component with the respondents who stated they watched regularly. One particular respondent shared her unique situation. She stated that she really hated reality TV in general, but she did watch the show *Survivor* because her 8-year-old granddaughter loved it. She watched it because she wanted to be close to her granddaughter and share a common interest with her. A few other respondents also mentioned that reality shows such as *Survivor* were more fun and enjoyable when they were watching it with others. Of those who stated that they watched reality shows alone, they stated that they really enjoyed discussing the shows the next day with family, friends and especially co-workers. One respondent even said that she was involved in an office pool that was organized around who would be kicked off the next *Survivor* episode.

5. Discussion

Because there are so many reality based television shows that exist today, it was thought that this genre of television must have some impact on its viewers. What were the reasons why people loved to watch reality TV? Were the reasons benign, with little effect on the community at large, or were the reasons substantial with a significant effect on community behavior?

The results of this study did not completely support the original hypothesis that reality TV did change a person's behavior in his or her community. A significant number of reality TV viewers said that they would rather watch a season finale of a reality show than go to an important town meeting. However, this question only asked about one episode of a show, the season finale and the respondents did not have the option to tape the show. It did not ask the respondents to consider missing an important town meeting for just a weekly episode. Perhaps viewers would only miss a town meeting for one special season ending show because it meant they could find out the final outcome. This explanation seems more likely than the original hypothesis because the respondents still reported being active in other areas of their community.

Reality TV viewing did not change whether the respondents visited family and friends, talked to their neighbors or spoke to acquaintances in the local supermarket. Within this sample, community involvement was still important to the respondents despite reality TV viewing. One reason for this may be that the communities within Santa Cruz County are closer knit because some of the towns are in the mountains with less people. The residents feel the need to band together for protection and camaraderie. The actual town of Santa Cruz, however, is a large town with a dense population, so the reasons for community involvement are probably different than the smaller towns. In this town, The University of California at Santa Cruz could influence their level of community activity. The actual community make-up of this county was not taken into account; it was thought that this county would be similar to other counties in the state of California. Perhaps a sampling of another county, such as Santa Clara County, would show different results. There are so many more people in Santa Clara County that residents feel less need to seek others out.

The random sampling of Santa Cruz County residents was also different than what was expected because the data was too homogeneous. The demographics showed an overwhelmingly number of Caucasian as well as an income level of over \$75,000 per year per household. Perhaps if there were more

respondents with different income levels and ethnic backgrounds, there would have been more varying views on reality TV viewing. Again, a sampling of another county would hopefully change this result as well.

The one variable that probably wouldn't change much in a different county is sex. Females reported slightly more than men that they watched reality TV. Not only did females watch more, but they also discussed the shows a lot more with others than did the men. This follows along with the research cited previously in the literature review. As Harrington and Bielby (1995) stated, women seemed to enjoy the discussion with friends after they watched their favorite soap opera. Even in Morley's (1986) work, women enjoyed watching shows that encouraged discussion and were not just informational.

The results for the reasons why people watched reality TV did support the idea that reality TV encouraged group interaction and community membership. The top three reasons people watched were: the discussion it created with family and friends after the show; the drama that occurs among the group members on the show; and getting to know the people on the show. These reasons showed how people did become more invested in the social aspect of these shows. Not only did they watch in order to have interaction with others around them, but they also enjoyed watching the social interaction that was displayed on the

television show. These were very encouraging results and showed that people enjoyed these reality shows primarily because of the social interaction offered.

The research about capitalism in the American culture and how it has covertly used the media to distract the masses has not been proven in this sampling of American citizens. Respondents certainly reported that they enjoyed their reality TV shows, but in the end, the shows did not replace chatting with a neighbor. Of course the media will have its effect on all of us in some way or another, but it still has not replaced the need for one-on-one social interaction with another human being.

6. Conclusion

This study began as an exploration of one of the newest television genres, reality TV. Reality TV has become such a phenomenon that at any time of the day, a person can turn on a television set and watch a reality TV show. The explosion of more reality TV shows was due primarily to their incredibly large audience. More and more people were tuning in to see what reality TV had to offer. The basic concept of the reality television show first existed with game shows, and now that concept has been expanded into watching real people interact in carefully constructed environments. What were the reasons people continued to watch reality TV? Who were the people watching reality TV? It was this paper's purpose to find the answers to those two questions and to also find out if this increase in reality TV viewing affected the audience's level of community involvement.

By looking at American capitalism and consumer culture, it was this study's intention to show that reality TV gave its viewers a new community to join. The very basis of popular American culture is that what is being offered by the consumer market must be wanted by consumers. Products will quickly disappear if the consumer does not buy them. Television has been a long established medium for the consumer market; it showed the consumer the

products to buy and gave them the reasons to buy. The products that would continue to be shown on the television were those that the consumer had already bought. This study has tried to look at how the consumer market had expanded its influence over people by creating reality TV. It has changed television viewing; people were given other “real” people to watch and have a social connection.

Had consumers now moved onto the television as a product for their sense of community? This study was designed to look at whether people who watched reality TV were doing so because they believed they knew the reality TV people and felt connected to them. Because viewers were being offered this connection with the people on the reality shows, they did not pursue other connections outside their homes. This would confirm a new sense of community created by reality TV. It was postulated that this type of community could take two forms: one was the actual reality show of which the viewer was made to feel a part, and another was the group of reality TV fans who get together to discuss the shows. These two types of community were offered to the consumer by the reality TV market, and it was being bought. What were the consequences of this happening (if any)? It was thought that reality TV played an integral part in a person's community activity level dropping because the traditional sense of

community was being replaced. Fortunately, this was not the case in this sample. People still reported strong community ties despite their interest in reality TV shows. This result did not support this study's hypothesis, however, it is a positive result because it shows that people still have investments in their communities and feel a connection to others around them.

Along with the lack of support for the hypotheses presented, there were a few mistakes in the survey that could have affected the results. One was with question 4 in which respondents were asked to rank their reasons for watching reality TV. The wording of the question made it sound as if the reasons needed to be ranked from 1 through 5, however there were more than 5 reasons so this was not the intention of the question. Respondents answered as if they needed to force rank the reasons instead of rating each reason individually. So some of the reasons did not receive any ranking.

Another problem was that several of the respondents began to figure out the research questions behind the survey. While conducting a phone survey, one respondent stated, "I know where this is going." Having an idea about what the research hypothesis might be, may have affected how the respondents answered the questions. Their answers may not have been completely unbiased; they may have given answers that they thought would be helpful or even not helpful.

Despite the problems that arose during this study, there were some very interesting findings about people who said that they watched reality TV and how they answered the community involvement questions. This project was an innovative step towards studying the genre of reality television because it opened the door to other possibilities of how it can influence its viewers. To improve and expand on this project, a look at the actual production of the reality show could be conducted. How the consumer culture values are implemented within the show would add to understanding its influence on the television audience. Such as the act of product placement on the actual set of the show and how it affects consumer behavior would make an interesting perspective.

Another interesting perspective would be to look at the editing process of reality TV and whether this type of show is “real” or just a better-orchestrated game show with soap opera qualities. Finally, the expansion of this study of reality TV would be to collect data from a much larger sample size or perhaps even several samples from different parts of the United States. There would be more variance in the data and possibly show how people in different communities value reality TV and community involvement.

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Appendix A

The following perl script was used to generate the list of random page number, column number, and row number sets that was used to pick random phone numbers out of a phone book.

```
@echo off
perl -w -x -S -- %0 %1 %2 %3 %4 %5 %6 %7 %8 %9
goto endofperl

#!perl
#line 6

#
# This perl script will output a list of random page number, column number,
# and row number sets that can be used to pick random phone numbers out of
# a phone book.
#

# This is the number of samples to generate
$TOTAL_NUMBER_OF_SAMPLES = 200;
# This is the number of pages in the phone book
$NUM_PAGES_IN_PHONEBOOK = 178;
# This is the number of columns on each page
$NUM_COLUMNS_PER_PAGE = 5;
# This is the maximum number of phone numbers per page
$MAX_NUM_NUMBERS_PER_PAGE = 95;

# "seed" perl's random number generator
$RandomSeed = int rand 10000;
print "seed: $RandomSeed\n";
# to duplicate the same samples again, substitute the random seed that was
# printed out in the previous generation here:
#     $RandomSeed = 9121
srand $RandomSeed;

# Initialize the pagenumber array
@PageNumbers = ();

# For each sample...
for ($i = 0; $i < $TOTAL_NUMBER_OF_SAMPLES; $i++)
{
    # pick a random page number between 1 and the number of pages
    $Val = RandRange($NUM_PAGES_IN_PHONEBOOK);
    $PageNumbers[$i] = $Val;
}
```

```

# Sort the pages so they're printed in order
@PageNumbers = sort (sort_numeric @PageNumbers);

# For each sample...
for ($i = 0; $i < $TOTAL_NUMBER_OF_SAMPLES; $i++)
{
    # Pick a column
    $ColumnNum = RandRange($NUM_COLUMNS_PER_PAGE);
    # Pick two rows. If the first row is beyond the range of the numbers
    # on the page, the person pulling the numbers can use the second row.
    $Num0 = RandRange($MAX_NUM_NUMBERS_PER_PAGE);
    $Num1 = RandRange($MAX_NUM_NUMBERS_PER_PAGE);

    # Format the PageNumber, Column, Row1 and Row2 into the string "$Out"
    $Out = sprintf("%.3d, %.1d, %.2d, %.2d", $PageNumbers[$i], $ColumnNum,
$Num0, $Num1);

    # Formatting (4 samples per line) and output the string
    if(($i % 4) == 0) && ($i != 0)
    {
        print "\n";
    }
    print "$Out    ";
}

#
# sort_numeric
#   This is a basic numeric sort for ordering the pages
sub sort_numeric
{
    $a <=> $b;
}

#
# RandRange
#   This is the subroutine that picks the random number using the perl
#   library's "rand" call.
sub RandRange
{
    my $Max = shift;
    $Dis = int rand ($Max);
    return $Dis + 1;
}

__END__

:endofperl

```

For this study, this script was run using perl version 5.005_03 built for MSWin32-

x86-object. Using the random seed 9121, the script output the following:

seed: 9121

002, 2, 67, 01	002, 5, 61, 94	002, 3, 31, 15	003, 5, 37, 91
004, 1, 52, 90	005, 1, 88, 54	006, 4, 58, 43	008, 1, 71, 93
008, 3, 91, 92	009, 5, 23, 64	009, 5, 93, 01	009, 1, 43, 80
011, 5, 07, 01	011, 5, 87, 30	011, 4, 32, 41	011, 3, 82, 69
012, 4, 87, 75	015, 3, 76, 80	015, 4, 49, 15	016, 4, 53, 09
016, 1, 84, 13	016, 1, 27, 36	017, 1, 49, 58	018, 4, 52, 37
019, 5, 30, 33	021, 4, 47, 55	022, 2, 08, 36	024, 3, 71, 08
024, 3, 59, 52	025, 2, 30, 89	025, 1, 41, 89	026, 2, 38, 54
027, 1, 32, 36	027, 4, 28, 39	028, 1, 63, 18	028, 1, 02, 89
028, 4, 81, 81	028, 5, 04, 58	028, 5, 83, 05	029, 4, 42, 10
029, 1, 79, 66	030, 4, 23, 15	032, 4, 37, 64	032, 2, 47, 11
033, 5, 35, 10	035, 2, 79, 49	035, 1, 06, 35	036, 3, 09, 29
038, 1, 67, 10	040, 1, 44, 04	043, 4, 14, 80	044, 1, 11, 10
045, 2, 58, 51	047, 1, 74, 33	047, 2, 71, 79	047, 4, 74, 13
049, 5, 36, 85	050, 1, 73, 82	055, 5, 18, 69	056, 3, 09, 29
056, 5, 24, 82	056, 2, 52, 60	057, 4, 42, 26	058, 2, 05, 65
058, 3, 46, 93	060, 3, 85, 26	060, 4, 87, 01	061, 1, 87, 88
062, 1, 79, 20	064, 5, 91, 09	064, 1, 69, 38	065, 4, 49, 65
065, 3, 50, 66	066, 5, 33, 25	066, 5, 75, 35	066, 2, 88, 15
067, 3, 59, 69	068, 4, 12, 15	068, 4, 72, 33	069, 3, 18, 10
069, 4, 77, 10	070, 5, 82, 64	070, 3, 32, 29	070, 1, 62, 30
073, 3, 50, 73	074, 3, 26, 56	076, 4, 77, 92	079, 5, 58, 02
080, 4, 40, 11	082, 4, 53, 87	083, 1, 33, 75	085, 3, 62, 22
085, 1, 13, 69	085, 3, 13, 19	086, 1, 04, 65	087, 3, 53, 42
087, 3, 31, 01	087, 3, 61, 71	088, 3, 10, 33	088, 4, 05, 65
089, 4, 89, 42	090, 3, 03, 71	090, 5, 27, 88	091, 1, 32, 35
093, 3, 63, 77	095, 1, 69, 22	095, 2, 77, 88	098, 4, 62, 94
099, 4, 58, 33	100, 4, 45, 87	100, 5, 04, 26	100, 2, 73, 91
100, 2, 07, 06	100, 3, 86, 75	100, 3, 10, 22	101, 5, 70, 72
102, 2, 42, 09	104, 2, 51, 45	104, 3, 55, 15	104, 3, 70, 72
106, 4, 19, 41	107, 5, 24, 35	107, 5, 69, 79	109, 4, 37, 64
109, 3, 87, 89	110, 4, 68, 43	111, 1, 11, 26	111, 3, 35, 15
112, 5, 32, 77	114, 2, 11, 73	114, 1, 26, 78	115, 5, 55, 48
116, 1, 36, 61	117, 2, 46, 56	118, 2, 17, 45	119, 2, 87, 85
120, 4, 15, 05	123, 3, 93, 08	124, 3, 14, 07	124, 4, 72, 18
125, 3, 82, 07	125, 3, 46, 72	126, 3, 07, 43	127, 1, 15, 66
127, 2, 55, 37	128, 4, 84, 21	130, 2, 48, 18	131, 5, 10, 95
131, 5, 93, 39	131, 3, 28, 63	132, 5, 43, 89	133, 3, 47, 07
133, 3, 73, 43	136, 5, 58, 60	136, 4, 47, 05	137, 2, 44, 91
137, 1, 03, 89	138, 1, 80, 48	138, 4, 07, 52	139, 2, 60, 20
139, 2, 25, 83	140, 2, 33, 09	142, 2, 47, 92	145, 2, 77, 23
146, 5, 16, 50	149, 4, 47, 87	149, 4, 55, 27	150, 3, 88, 95
151, 3, 20, 56	151, 5, 06, 60	155, 2, 46, 43	156, 2, 41, 79
156, 2, 67, 66	156, 3, 63, 88	156, 5, 49, 59	158, 2, 29, 20
158, 1, 70, 64	160, 2, 49, 58	161, 3, 59, 65	161, 2, 60, 13
162, 4, 50, 28	163, 2, 12, 08	163, 2, 35, 24	165, 1, 84, 68
166, 3, 45, 86	166, 1, 79, 86	168, 4, 85, 51	168, 4, 15, 88
168, 4, 66, 81	169, 2, 93, 69	170, 1, 82, 42	172, 1, 12, 92
172, 2, 13, 83	172, 1, 69, 20	173, 2, 81, 21	174, 5, 20, 24
175, 4, 09, 49	176, 3, 10, 29	176, 2, 18, 95	178, 2, 64, 43

Appendix B: Questionnaire and Consent Form

Hello, my name is Mary Zinkievich, and I am a graduate student at San Jose State University. I am conducting a study about why “reality” television shows have become so popular. If you are 18 years of age or older, I would really appreciate your participation in this study. Your participation in this survey is voluntary and you may choose to not participate at any point of this survey. You will be asked a series of questions that I would like you to answer as honestly as possible. This is a confidential survey and your answers will remain anonymous. Once you complete this survey please mail it in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope. If you have any questions or complaints regarding this survey, please phone SJSU Sociology Department at (408) 924-5320. Thank you for your cooperation.

Please circle the answer(s) that best applies to you:

1. How many hours per week do you watch television? (Please circle one)

A. 0-5 B.6-10 C.11-15 D.16-20 E. 21-25 F.26-30 G.31-35 H.Over 35

2. Do you now or have you ever watched reality-based television shows such as Survivor, Big Brother, Amazing Race, or Temptation Island? Please circle: Yes or No

(If your answer is no, please move on to Question 7)

3. If the answer to the previous question was yes, how often do you watch reality-based television shows? (Please circle one)

A. Rarely B. Sometimes C. Frequently D. All the time

4. On a scale of 1-5, please rate the following reasons for watching reality-based television:

(1 would mean it is the best reason, 5 would mean the least likely reason)

There's nothing else on at the time: _____

Getting to know the people on the show: _____

The competitions are very exciting: _____

The discussion it creates after the show with family and friends: _____

The discussion it creates with other people in my community (neighbors, store cashiers, etc.): _____

The drama that occurs among the group members on the show: _____

Feeling a connection with specific contestants and hoping that they win: _____

Other:

5. Do you prefer to watch reality-based shows alone or with others?

A. Alone B. With others

Please explain your answer:

6. Do you or have you ever-discussed reality-based shows with others?

Please circle: Yes or No

If yes, what do you talk about?

7. Do you currently belong to any clubs or organizations (including church)?

Yes No

8. If the answer to #7 was yes, how many? A. 1-3 B. 4-6 C. More than 6

9. Do you vote? Please circle: Yes No

10. If you had to choose between watching the season finale of your favorite reality-based TV show or attending a very important community event such as a town meeting, which would you choose? (Assuming that you couldn't tape the show.)

A. Season finale

B. Town meeting

Please briefly explain your choice:

11. How often do you recognize and talk to people in your local supermarket?

(Please circle one)

Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Frequently

All the time

12. How often do you visit friends or family who live near you? (Please circle one)

Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Frequently
All the time

13. How often do you talk to your neighbors? (Please circle one)

Never
Rarely
Sometimes
Frequently
All the time

14. What is your sex?

A. Male B. Female

15. What is your employment status?

A. Full time B. Part time C. Unemployed D. Other: _____

16. What is your age?

A. 18-24 B. 25-34 C. 35-44 D. 45-54 E. Over 55

17. What is your ethnicity?

Caucasian
African-American
Asian-American/Pacific Islander
Latino-American
Other, specify: _____

18. What is your approximate household annual income?

0-14,999
15,000-29,999
30,000-44,999
45,000-59,999

60,000-74,999

Over 75,000

Please Note: If you are interested in the results of this study, please check the box below and a copy of it will be sent to you as soon as it is completed.

Yes, I would like a copy of this study.

Agreement to Participate in Research
Responsible Investigator: Mary Zinkievich
Title of Protocol: The Popularity of Reality TV

I have been asked to participate in a research study investigating the popularity of reality-based television.

I will be asked to answer a survey of questions pertaining to reality based television shows, community involvement and personal demographics.

No foreseeable risks or benefits are expected in answering this survey.

This study may be published but no information will be used that could identify anyone who chooses to participate in this study.

Questions about this study may be addressed to the principal investigator at (831) 338-2473. Complaints about the research may be presented to the Sociology Department Chair, Carol Ray, at (408) 924-5320. Questions about research, subjects' rights, or research-related injury may be presented to the Associate Vice President for Graduate Studies Research, at (408) 924-2480.

No service of any kind will be lost or jeopardized if one chooses to not participate in this study.

Consent is given voluntarily. One may refuse to participate in this entire study or in any particular part of this study. If one does choose to participate in this study, he or she is free to withdraw at any time without prejudice to one's relations with San Jose State University.

If you choose to participate, a copy of this consent form will be mailed back to you.

Signature of Participant

Date

Investigator's Signature

Date

Appendix C: Comparison of Frequencies Between Mail and Phone Surveys

Mail Surveys

Do you watch reality TV?

Yes 13

No 17

No response 1

How often do you watch reality TV?

Rarely 4

Sometimes 6

Frequently 2

All the time 1

No response 18

Do you watch reality TV alone or with others?

Alone 6

With others 5

No response 20

Do you discuss reality TV with others?

Yes 12

No 5

No response 14

Do you belong to any clubs?

Yes 26

No 5

Phone Surveys

Do you watch reality TV?

Yes 20

No 9

No response 1

How often do you watch reality TV?

Rarely 5

Sometimes 7

Frequently 5

All the time 3

No response 10

Do you watch reality TV alone or with others?

Alone 5

With others 14

No response 11

Do you discuss reality TV with others?

Yes 18

No 3

No response 9

Do you belong to any clubs?

Yes 15

No 15

How many clubs?

1-3 clubs 21

4-6 clubs 4

More than 6 clubs 1

No response 5

How many clubs?

1-3 clubs 12

4-6 clubs 3

More than 6 clubs 0

No response 15

Do you vote?

Yes 29

No 1

No response 1

Do you vote?

Yes 24

No 5

No response 1

How often do you talk to people
at your local supermarket?

Never 1

Rarely 5

Sometimes 13

Frequently 8

All the time 4

How often do you talk to people
at your local supermarket?

Never 4

Rarely 4

Sometimes 9

Frequently 7

All the time 6

How often do you visit friends/family?

Never 0

Rarely 1

Sometimes 8

Frequently 14

All the time 8

How often do you visit
friends/family?

Never 1

Rarely 3

Sometimes 7

Frequently 11

All the time 8

How often do you talk to neighbors?

Never 1

Rarely 7

Sometimes 6

Frequently 10

All the time 7

How often do you talk to
neighbors?

Never 2

Rarely 5

Sometimes 7

Frequently 10

All the time 6

Appendix D: Frequencies of the Variable "Please Rank Your Reasons for Watching Reality TV" (coded REASON)

Rank A: There is nothing else on at the time					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	6	9.8	22.2	22.2
	3	4	6.6	14.8	37.0
	4	4	6.6	14.8	51.9
	5	13	21.3	48.1	100.0
	Total	27	44.3	100.0	
Missing	9	34	55.7		
Total		61	100.0		

Rank B: Getting to know the people on the show					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	4	6.6	13.3	13.3
	2	6	9.8	20.0	33.3
	3	6	9.8	20.0	53.3
	4	2	3.3	6.7	60.0
	5	12	19.7	40.0	100.0
	Total	30	49.2	100.0	
Missing	9	31	50.8		
Total		61	100.0		

Rank C: The competitions are very exciting

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	1	1.6	3.6	3.6
	2	5	8.2	17.9	21.4
	3	7	11.5	25.0	46.4
	4	5	8.2	17.9	64.3
	5	10	16.4	35.7	100.0
Total		28	45.9	100.0	
Missing	9	33	54.1		
Total		61	100.0		

Rank D: The discussion it creates after the show with family and friends

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	4	6.6	13.3	13.3
	2	6	9.8	20.0	33.3
	3	8	13.1	26.7	60.0
	4	4	6.6	13.3	73.3
	5	8	13.1	13.1	100.0
Total		30	49.2	100.0	
Missing	9	31	50.8		
Total		61	100.0		

Rank E: The discussion it creates with other people in my community

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	2	3.3	7.1	7.1
	3	5	8.2	17.9	25.0
	4	6	9.8	21.4	46.4
	5	15	24.6	53.6	100.0
Total		28	45.9	100.0	
Missing	9	33	54.1		
Total		61	100.0		

Rank F: The drama that occurs among the group members on the show

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	9	14.8	30.0	30.0
	2	4	6.6	13.3	43.3
	3	5	8.2	16.7	60.0
	4	2	3.3	6.7	66.7
	5	10	16.4	33.3	100.0
	Total	30	49.2	100.0	
Missing	9	31	50.8		
Total		61	100.0		

Rank G: Feeling a connection with specific contestants and hoping that they win

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	1	1.6	3.4	3.4
	2	10	16.4	34.5	37.9
	3	5	8.2	17.2	55.2
	4	1	1.6	3.4	58.6
	5	12	19.7	41.4	100.0
	Total	29	47.5	100.0	
Missing	9	32	52.5		
Total		61	100.0		

Rank H: Like to think about how you would do as a contestant

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	1	1.6	3.6	3.6
	2	6	9.8	21.4	25.0
	3	5	8.2	17.9	42.9
	4	3	4.9	10.7	53.6
	5	13	21.3	46.4	100.0
	Total	28	45.9	100.0	
Missing	9	33	54.1		
Total		61	100.0		

Rank I: Other					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	7	11.5	77.8	77.8
	2	1	1.6	11.1	88.9
	5	1	1.6	11.1	100.0
	Total	9	14.8	100.0	
Missing	9	52	85.2		
Total		61	100.0		

Appendix E:

Mail survey subjective responses:

Question 4: On a scale of 1-5, please rate the following reasons for watching reality TV:

"I was curious and watched part of one show."

Question 5: Do you prefer to watch reality shows alone or with others:

"I live alone."

"Doesn't really matter."

"I don't have a preference frankly. It just turns out I'm alone every week when I watch."

"My TV watching is random and I usually don't plan it out with who I'm with."

"It does not really matter."

"I just usually watch it alone, but it would be fun to watch with others."

"Don't like to be disturbed. I do watch Survivor with others, but the rest solo."

"It creates conversation."

"I don't usually watch TV, especially with others. I like to socialize when I'm with people."

"I live by myself."

Question 6: Do you or have you ever discussed reality shows with others:

"Who got kicked off Survivor."

"How ridiculous they are."

"Who got voted off Survivor and why. It's the only show I watch on TV each week."

"How foolish they are."

"The fact that we didn't like it."

"About how trashy these programs seem."

"The people's attitudes on the show."

"We talk about what happened on the show."

"Who you like and who you don't. Who you think will win."

"Whatever was a surprise to me. Whatever went well, etc. Just to process it."

"The outcomes or what you would have done."

"The drama, gossip."

Question 10: Which would you choose, town meeting or season finale of a reality show:

"Don't own TV."

"Neither. We don't watch these programs and we aren't in the city limits."

"Would benefit me to what's going on."

"I don't watch television and I do care about important community events."

"Most of my volunteer time is done during the day, when the kids are in school. The evenings are more tricky for me, in terms of going out to attend meetings, etc. because of childcare. Thus, watching TV would be my obvious choice."

"My participation isn't valuable to season finale."

"Isn't it obvious?"

"Wouldn't watch that junk anyhow."

"The town meeting would be REAL and relevant. The TV show isn't!!!"

"Never watch TV."

"TV is evil. I finally got a little one last year for \$2. One channel. I only watch late night when I can't sleep."

"Don't watch reality based TV."

"Reality TV is not entertainment for me."

"Television isn't real."

"TV doesn't run my life."

"It all depends on the meeting. If it's a bullshit meeting, I won't go. But if it's something about our local schools, I would miss the show."

"I don't have any favourite shows, and if I did, it would depend on what issues were being dealt with at the town meeting. If it was something important to me, I'd be there."

"It all depends on how I felt about the topic being discussed at the town meeting."

"That's tough to answer. 9 out of 10 times I would choose the season finale. But since you say very important town meeting, I have to go with that answer. I would try to save the value of my property by attending a town meeting, but usually town meetings are boring and unimportant."

"Really is 50/50! I am very active in my community and if it was crucial I would go but it would take a lot for me to miss Survivor!"

"Town meetings have direct effect on my life."

"I'd rather associate with real people than just watch them on TV."

"I am an environmental activist and hold related events to be a top priority."

"I don't take much interest in TV."

"It's more important."

"Real life is more important. Real people are more important."

Phone survey subjective responses:

Question 4: On a scale of 1-5, please rate the following reasons for watching reality TV:

"Hate them, I watch with my granddaughter who is 8."

"I like to watch who got kicked off on the morning shows."

"Curiosity."

"It's thoughtless entertainment, not serious and it's humorous."

Question 5: Do you prefer to watch reality shows alone or with others:

"Enjoy the conversation it creates and hear others react to show's drama."

"I like the conversations I have with other people."

"It's more fun, you can talk about the people on the show."

"Watch with granddaughter, she loves Survivor."

"Discussing people."

"I prefer the interaction with others."

"Concentrate better."

"More fun to discuss and encourage heroes."

"If alone, I'm sure that I could find something else more worthwhile to do."

"I'm embarrassed that I watched Survivor once, I don't want anyone to know."

Question 6: Do you or have you ever discussed reality shows with others:

"Talk with co-workers and friends about who got kicked off, we even take pools on who will get kicked off."

"Why do people like them. They are stupid, but people get sucked into it. It's only a sense of reality."

"How dumb they are."

"Granddaughter, who was voted off."

"Tell my husband who got kicked off (he doesn't watch)."

"What happened in the contests. Such as when the survivors ate bugs."

"Disappointment in their choice or agree with choice on who gets voted off the island."

"What is wrong with society that shows like this have an appeal."

"Glad that someone I don't like is voted off the island. I like seeing the different personalities on the show."

Question 10: Which would you choose, town meeting or season finale of a reality show:

"Show is more interesting. I have short attention span so I couldn't sit through a town meeting."

"It's taking an active participation in what directly affects me."

"Want to know what's going on in my community."

"Hate those shows, just watch to be close to my granddaughter."

"Neither interests me."

"Going to the town meeting would affect me personally."

"More important."

"Depends on what the town meeting is about and if it affects me."

"I truly dislike reality based show. I coach, play drums for a gospel choir/band and mentor. I work and raise my 12-year-old boy. No time for such shows."

"Don't care for reality shows."

"I want to see what will happen on the show. I would send my spouse to town meeting."

"I see no redeeming value in the stupidity of reality TV."

"It it's something I believe in."

Appendix F: Human Subjects-Institutional Review Board Approval Letter

San José State UNIVERSITY

**Office of the Academic
Vice President**

**Associate Vice President
Graduate Studies and Research**

One Washington Square
San José, CA 95192-0025
Voice: 408-283-7500
Fax: 408-924-2477
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<http://www.sjsu.edu>

To: Mary Zinkievich
545 Kings Highway
Boulder Creek, CA 95006

From: Nabil Ibrahim,
AVP, Graduate Studies & Research

Date: March 8, 2002

The Human Subjects-Institutional Review Board has approved your request to use human subjects in the study entitled:

"The Popularity of Reality TV."

This approval is contingent upon the subjects participating in your research project being appropriately protected from risk. This includes the protection of the anonymity of the subjects' identity when they participate in your research project, and with regard to any and all data that may be collected from the subjects. The approval includes continued monitoring of your research by the Board to assure that the subjects are being adequately and properly protected from such risks. If at any time a subject becomes injured or complains of injury, you must notify Nabil Ibrahim, Ph.D. immediately. Injury includes but is not limited to bodily harm, psychological trauma, and release of potentially damaging personal information. This approval for the human subjects portion of your project is in effect for one year, and data collection beyond March 7, 2003 requires an extension request.

Please also be advised that all subjects need to be fully informed and aware that their participation in your research project is voluntary, and that he or she may withdraw from the project at any time. Further, a subject's participation, refusal to participate, or withdrawal will not affect any services that the subject is receiving or will receive at the institution in which the research is being conducted.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (408) 924-2480.