How social media ranks fall TV’s hit shows

We asked Nielsen to tell us the best-rated series* from the start of the fall TV season—and then had buzz-tracker Trendrr.tv and check-in service GetGlue give us their numbers. Here’s how and why they do and don’t match up

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**Nielsen Ratings**

1. Two and a Half Men (CBS, Sept. 19) 16.7
2. Dancing with the Stars (ABC, Sept. 19) 12.3
3. NCIS (CBS, Sept. 20) 12.2
4. 2 Broke Girls (CBS, Sept. 19) 11.5
5. NCIS: Los Angeles (CBS, Sept. 20) 10.3
6. Dancing with the Stars Results Show (ABC, Sept. 20) 9.8

**Trendrr TV Social Buzz**

1. Two and a Half Men (CBS, Sept. 19) 510,776
2. Dancing with the Stars (ABC, Sept. 19) 185,681
3. Criminal Minds (CBS, Sept. 21) 146,481
4. Dancing with the Stars Results Show (ABC, Sept. 20) 90,259
5. NCIS: Los Angeles (CBS, Sept. 20) 81,996
6. Big Bang Theory, episode 1 (CBS, Sept. 22) 52,809

**GetGlue Check-Ins**

1. Dancing with the Stars (ABC, Sept. 19) 19,801
2. NCIS (CBS, Sept. 20) 10,769
3. NCIS (CBS, Sept. 20) 5,769
4. Dancing with the Stars Results Show (ABC, Sept. 20, 2066) 4,939

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**So Why Do Networks Seem to Care So Much About Social TV?**

- Show-to-show social TV ratings might not always correlate to Nielsen ratings in a linear sense, but rising and falling social engagement from week to week for individual shows can be very illuminating for networks. “Social buzz does tend to signal tune-in intent,” says Trendrr CEO Mark Ghuneim. “People who are socially engaged with a show this week are much more likely to also tune in next week.”

- Networks are increasingly making the case to advertisers that a highly engaged audience is icing on the cake of solid ratings—icing worthy paying a premium for: Sinking social engagement over time can serve as the canary in a coal mine for network execs. For instance, declining social engagement for former social TV champ “Glee” signaled that the show was losing steam. Last year’s season premiere garnered over half a million tweets; this year’s season premiere dropped by roughly 200,000 tweets—and Nielsen ratings fell 29%.

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*For the purposes of this comparison, we looked at new and returning prime-time series. News, sports and special-events programming are excluded.