

# Potholes in the Creative Process

## TV Ads Cause Difficulties for Writers

Writer-producer Matthew Weiner and David E. Kelly discuss the insane amount of commercials on TV today, and how it disrupts their ability to produce a show.

Curious, I decided to survey the amount of ads jammed into many of the programs that I watch. After checking several cable stations, I was shocked at what I uncovered.

*I Love Lucy* aired several times in the afternoon yesterday. One episode started with an amazing chunk of opening dialogue missing from the starting scene. I know because I've seen it many times. I knew the gap was to allow for ad placement:

**Lucy:** 1:43-1:46 p.m. = 9 ads

The sitcom resumed but within 4 minutes, cut away to more ads!  
1:50-1:53 = 8 ads...

On another channel, I counted 6 ads during one 4-minute break of the airing of another classic sitcom; one ad was 2 minutes long.

## Sunday Movie

Then I tracked ads on a major network airing a popular three-star 2.5 hour feature at night: The count was jaw-dropping.

The movie began at 8 p.m., and after the opening scenes commercial breaks were frequent. 8:18 to 8:25 p.m. = 14 ads

8:38 p.m.- 8:43 p.m. =14 ads

8:53 p.m. – 8:58 p.m. = 11 ads

9:07 p.m. – 9:14p.m.= 14 ads

9:25p.m. – 9:30 p.m. = 13 ads

9:41p.m. – 9:46p.m. = 13 ads

9:59 p.m. -10:04p.m. = 12 ads...

*Get the*

*picture?*

**Lesson:** Industry wide changes can transform and disrupt the way you use your skills. In the example above, not only are TV writers suffering, but viewers are paying for the changes...literally!

Reference

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/tavis-smiley/interviews/writer-producer-matthew-weiner/>