

Real World Graduation: Question 46: Music Videos

Edward D. Duvall
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Question 46

The first music video network, called "Music TV", better known as MTV, was launched in Aug 1981. It began by showing video clips of musical acts, and later expanded to commentary on popular culture, reality shows, satire, and some political activism, mostly concerning the environment and getting young people to vote. There are now several music video networks, among them are VH1 and CMT. What is the underlying purpose of the music video networks?

- a) To finally give young people an opportunity to see their favorite musical acts without censorship by the traditional networks
- b) To allow a youth-oriented culture to express itself over the airwaves
- c) To provide an opportunity for up-and-coming musical acts to obtain some exposure
- d) To allow the recording companies to test the potential popularity of their new acts before committing to a full contract
- e) All of the above

Answer to Question 46

This is a trick question. None of the provided answers address the real purpose of MTV and the other music networks.

The real purpose of these networks is the same as any other network, namely, to get the viewers to watch commercials, because advertising revenue is where the real money is. The music videos are the method used to get you to tune in.

The central goal of any entertainment outlet is to capture the attention and loyalty of a target audience with a lot of disposable income. The more impressionable that audience is the better. Those characteristics describe teenagers best: not skilled at critical thinking (hence susceptible to flashy advertising), and with money to spend (from part-time jobs or allowances, with few expenses). You will never see a TV channel devoted to music of the 1940's: most of that target audience is elderly, and most of them do not have sufficient disposable income to attract the attention of the advertising industry.