

The Big Picture



By creating the 'iPod Emmy,' the Daytime Emmys are **redefining** the small screen

By Beth Schacter

As an event that consigns the miscellany of not-primetime television to one patchwork quilt of prizes, the Daytime Emmy Awards ceremony always has relied on getting glitz from soap actors, an all-ages crowd from children's television and a pseudohip factor from talk- and game-show hosts. But for this year's ceremony, National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences president and CEO Peter Price decided to shake things up.

Rather than limiting the scope of the Daytime Emmys to programs that are broadcast through the traditional means, Price and NATAS have broadened the definition of television to include original content beyond that which viewers watch from the couch in their living rooms.

"Television is images on a screen," Price says.

The new awards category, called "outstanding achievement in content for nontraditional delivery platforms," has certified a new TV universe — one that could have an infinite number of channels — and demonstrated that the awards show is changing with the industry.

"Technology is pushing us forward," Price says. "I presented the National Awards committee a challenge to really define television, and the award is part of that response."

The Daytime Emmys now recognize original programming specifically created for computers, mobile phones, iPods, PDAs and similar devices. New awards will honor creativity in editorial content and video production in eight categories. (The awards, except for those in the sports category, will be presented April 28 during the 33rd annual Daytime Emmy Awards; the sports awards will be presented May 1 during the 27th annual Sports Emmy Awards.)

The category is not quite revolutionary, but it certainly is timely.



First Prize

The Daytime Emmys usually mean honoring traditional TV shows like ABC's "General Hospital" (top, last year's outstanding drama series winner), but new categories make room for extended content from shows such as Discovery Kids' "Hi-5" (center) and NBC's "Passions" (webisode "Passions Red").

A 2005 Pew Internet & American Life Project study estimated that 53% of home Internet users have high-speed connections that allow them to stream content, turning any computer into a television. A single video — posted on the right blog — can be circulated so rapidly that the maker literally can become an overnight sensation.

The new category is timely in another way, as several Daytime Emmy regulars have been creating their own original content and/or podcasts for some time. NBC's soap "Passions" isn't up for an Emmy this year with its traditional broadcast, but the show's webisode "Passions Red" has been submitted for what has been dubbed an "iPod Emmy." The episode was part of a 10-week online promotional campaign that began in October and featured more than 20 two-minute serialized video clips that dovetailed with the broadcast show's story line. During that period, the soap's Web site was viewed more than 10 million times.

Annamarie Kostura, vp daytime programs for NBC, calls the Internet a natural medium for soap fans: "The relationship that daytime viewers have to their shows is that they are family, and they want to talk about their family."

CBS' "The Guiding Light" and "As the World Turns" (up for 14 and