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## Americans Getting A Reality Overdose?

### Many Overwhelmed by Reality TV Choices, Ipsos-Insight reveals

**March 25, 2004, New York** — Four out of five Americans say there are too many reality dating programs, like *The Bachelor*, on the air. And when it comes to *Survivor* and reality celebrity-type programs, like *The Osbournes*, 67% of Americans say there are simply too many. These are some of the key findings from a recent poll about reality TV programs conducted by global research firm Ipsos-Insight.

The company, a member of the Ipsos Group, one of the world's leading survey-based market research companies, recently surveyed 1,000 adults on 18 varieties of TV programming – from reality shows and talent competitions to prime time dramas – and found that many respondents are overwhelmed by the number and type of reality TV options. Still, there's no denying the popularity of reality TV; shows in this genre garnered 4 of the top 6 most watched spots between March 8 to March 14.

"Reality TV remains a major force in television and a huge pop phenomenon, no matter what the culture critics say. But the category is awfully crowded and viewers are picking the winners and zapping the losers without mercy," said Lynne Bartos, a senior analyst with Ipsos-Insight's Cable, Media & Entertainment practice.

"For every *The Apprentice* (a ratings hit for NBC that has made its host, Donald Trump, the nation's newest reality TV hero) there is a *Forever Eden*," which has struggled since its premiere and dwindled to low single digit rating/share figures in the all-important Adult 18-49 demographic, Bartos added.

"It's a brutal business. Concepts get old so quickly and it's hard to keep things fresh," Bartos said. "But just when you think the genre is dead or lost its edge, out of nowhere comes *The Apprentice*. Now, who would have called that one?"

### Back to Basics

Among those surveyed by Ipsos-Insight, historical documentaries, on the other hand seem to be in high demand, with 51% saying there are "too few" of these programs on TV.

Crime-solvers, sports documentaries, situation comedies, and primetime dramas are well slotted, with half of Americans agreeing that these programs are shown in just the right amount, and the other half split on "too much" or "too little."

When it comes to talent competitions, such as *American Idol*, an equal number of Americans say there are "just the right amount of these programs on TV" (44%) as do those that say there are "too many" (43%).



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"With the space getting so crowded, and the novelty of reality TV wearing a little thin, the pressure on programmers to do their due diligence to identify winners and losers in the pilot stage is increasing," Bartos concluded. "Gone are the early days of pitch it, write it, shoot it and they will come. The polling data seem to suggest that only a handful of new reality TV concepts will survive longer than 2 to 4 weeks, if that."

### **Methodology**

*Data were gathered using the [Ipsos U.S. Express](#) from March 12 to 15 , 2004. Interviews were conducted via telephone among a nationally representative U.S. sample of 1,000 adults age 18 and older.*

### **About Ipsos-Insight**

Ipsos-Insight, the flagship marketing research division of Ipsos in the U.S., specializes in research for companies in the following industries: agrifood; cable, media and entertainment; consumer packaged goods; energy and utilities; financial services; health; lottery and gaming; retail; and technology & communications. Ipsos-Insight provides custom and tracking research services to domestic clients, as well as U.S.-based multinationals. It also offers concept and product testing, package testing, attitude and usage studies, omnibuses, tracking systems, brand equity, volume forecasting, marketing models, advanced analytics and global research. To learn more, please visit [www.ipsos-insight.com](http://www.ipsos-insight.com).