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Article Discussion Read Edit View history Search

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Main page
Contents
Featured content
Current events
Random article
Donate to Wikipedia

Interaction
Help
About Wikipedia
Community portal
Recent changes
Contact Wikipedia

Toolbox

Print/export

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Pop-Up Video

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Pop Up Video is a VH1 television show that "pops up" bubbles — officially called "info nuggets" — containing trivia, witticisms and borderline sexual innuendos throughout music videos. The show was created by Woody Thompson and Tad Low and premiered October 27, 1996. For a time, it was the highest-rated program on VH1, though *Behind the Music* overtook it by 1998.[1] It was produced by Spin the Bottle Inc..

In October 2011, ***Pop Up Video*** was revived by VH1, featuring new videos with new trivia and commentary.

Pop Up Video	
Format	Music video
Created by	Woody Thompson Tad Low
Starring	Various singers/groups
Country of origin	USA
No. of seasons	Original series: 6 Revived series: 1
No. of episodes	209
Production	
Running time	approx. 0:22 (per episode)
Broadcast	
Original channel	VH1 and VH1 Classic
Original run	Original series: October 27, 1996 – August 8, 2002 Revived series: October 3, 2011 - present

Contents

1 Format
2 History
3 Specials and other versions
4 Controversy
5 Reception and commentary
6 Reboot
7 DVD releases
8 Derivatives and parodies
9 See also
10 References
11 External links

Format [edit]

Most episodes of *Pop Up Video* play four or five music videos each, selected to include new, older, "classic", and "campy" videos. The bubbles that pop up in each video generally appear about every 10–15 seconds; their content is divided between information about the recording artist featured, the production of the video, and random facts. One of the show's staff writers is assigned to each video.[2] Production costs for each episode total about $30,000.[1]

The "random" information presented in bubbles frequently included statistics and demographics, medical, scientific, and historical trivia, definitions, and lists of a wide range of subjects.[3] Gary Burns, in the *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, also notes as a recurring theme "the producers' attempt to turn practically every popped-up video into a dirty joke."[1]

Often the film crew for the video in question would be interviewed in the research process; everyone from the director to make-up artists, choreographers, models, and extras might be used as sources.[4] In addition, the producers solicited information by means of a phone line (displayed during the closing credits) and web site page.[2] General facts are double- or triple-sourced, according to the producers.[1]

History [edit]

Thompson and Low previously worked together on Brandon Tartikoff's late night talk show *Last Call*, before it was cancelled in 1994. They spent the next two years making pitches of ideas for television shows to various networks;[5] in late 1995, the original iteration of the show concept, titled *Pop Up Videos*, was sent to VH1 executives, alongside a number of other concepts making use of aspects of songs or music videos. The pilot episode cost $3000 to produce; the first video to be played on the show was Tina Turner's "Missing You".[6]

1997 saw *Pop Up Video*'s profile expand as popular news publications such as *The New York Times*, *Newsweek*, and *Entertainment Weekly* all produced articles about the show.[7]

In 2000, *Entertainment Weekly* reported that Low was no longer involved with the production of the show.[8]

As of 2000, Thompson was the president of his own production company, Eyeboogie, based in Hollywood.

Specials and other versions [edit]

Special episodes of *Pop Up Video* aired throughout the series' run. Many focused on specific artists, including VH1 staples Madonna, U2, Prince, and Elton John. Others ran on different themes, such as "Women First," "Road Trip," "Movies," and "Duets". There were also several holiday specials, including Halloween and several Christmas episodes. Some theme episodes broke with the show's format by including a montage of clips from many videos.[9]

During a week of 1980s-themed programming on VH1 in March 1998, *Pop Up Video* became *Pop Up '80s*.[1] These episodes featured additional clips of 1980s news events and pop culture tidbits between music videos.

The 1996 *VH1 Fashion Awards, Divas Live, The Oprah Winfrey Show* (aired in syndication), several episodes of *the Brady Bunch* (aired on Nick at Nite in 2001, effectively named "Pop Up Brady"),[1] ABC's Original TGIF 1998 and 1999 line-up's season premieres and *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire* (December 2000)[1] also got the *Pop Up* treatment. Other proposals, such as a *Pop Up Video* edition of the entirety of *Grease* during its 1998 theatrical re-release, were never realized.[10] It was also used in a second version of the remake of the original 1974 Meow Mix commercial in 2002, which lacks the lyrics.

A United Kingdom-specific version entitled *Pop Up Video UK*, aired on Channel 4, and still occasionally airs on VH1 UK and Europe. This version featured music videos by British artists such as Robbie Williams, Spice Girls, and Elvis Costello.

In January 2000, the spinoff program *Pop Up Quiz* debuted on VH1. Utilizing the same format as *Pop Up Video*, the show presented trivia questions inspired by the content of each music video shown;[11] for example, the game "Phil in the blank" was played over the video for "Sussudio" by [12]

Phil Collins. Launched at a time when the *Pop Up Video* brand had become a "veritable franchise",[13] the show was called a "weak spin-off" among several "duds" launched by the network at the time.[11]

The 25th anniversary DVD release of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* features a *Pop Up* video clip of one of the film's musical numbers, "Hot Patootie-Bless My Soul", as an extra on the second disc.

MSG Network currently airs a show called *TXT MSG*, which gives the "pop up" treatment to classic sporting events from MSG's library. This is an official Spin the Bottle production, and Low is credited as an executive producer.

Controversy [edit]

Artists such as Billy Joel, Jakob Dylan of The Wallflowers, and The Police, as well as others such as director Mark Pellington and Sony Music Entertainment president Tommy Mottola complained about what they perceived as harsh treatment on the show and the videos they featured in were pulled. The show's creators called these "the Pops They Stopped."[14] In contrast, some artists, including Joan Osborne and Paula Abdul, made appearances on the show to provide further information on their popped videos.

Reception and commentary [edit]

Pop Up Video is most frequently compared to the contemporaneous television programs *Beavis and Butt-head* and *Mystery Science Theater 3000*, which were known for their on-screen commentary ridiculing, respectively, music videos and films.[1][15][16][17] As these shows were described as "TV-for-people-who-are-sick-of-TV",[17] *Pop Up Video* has been called "a show for people who hate videos".[16]

Reboot [edit]

VH1 has ordered 60 new half-hour episodes of *Pop Up Video* to air beginning October 3, 2011.[18][19]

DVD releases [edit]

Title	Cover Art	Release date
VH-1 Pop Up Video: '80s		July 6, 1999

Derivatives and parodies [edit]

- Early on, the show's popularity led to several copycats, most notably on an episode of the ABC television series *Sabrina, the Teenage Witch* (September 19, 1997)[20] and a series of Bell Atlantic commercials.[21] Spin The Bottle, the creators of *Pop Up Video*, publicly derided these *Pop Up* imitators on its website.[22]
- "Crazy comedy" anime by ADV Films usually have a *Pop Up Video*-type special feature called AD-Vid-Notes. The notes explain Japanese pop culture references to American viewers. Anime with AD-Vid-Notes include *Nerima Daikon Brothers*, *Pani Poni Dash*, *Excel Saga* and *Magical Shopping Arcade Abenobashi*.

- Cartoon Network aired a pop up marathon celebrating the end of the cartoon, *Chowder*. Disney Channel aired "Pop up" versions of each *High School Musical* movie and *Sharpay's Fabulous Adventure*, *Jump In!*, *The Cheetah Girls 2*, *Camp Rock 2: The Final Jam*, and *Lemonade Mouth*. Pop-up version of the movies are called "What's What? Editions".
- During *The Simpsons* episode "Weekend at Burnsie's" (on Fox Broadcasting Company), Marge is making the scarecrow for her vegetable patch, and then pop-ups appear on the screen in the style of *Pop Up Video*.
- A similar show is aired on the Argentine TV channel I.Sat. It's called *Video Maní* (peanut video), because the pop-ups are a 3-D rotating peanut. It features a series of true/false questions on things regarding the theme of the video, and after a few seconds it shows "true" or "false". As I.Sat is a movie channel, the videos are used as fill between movies.
- In 1997, NBC aired pop-up versions of some of their sitcoms, including the fiftieth episode of *NewsRadio*. Two TLC series have also employed special "pop-up" versions of episodes: *Cake Boss* (as *Cake Boss: Icing on the Cake*) and *Kate Plus 8* (as *Kate Plus 8: Plus More*).
- The 2000 horror spoof *Shriek If You Know What I Did Last Friday the Thirteenth* featured a spoof scene titled "Chop-Up Video".
- At the height of the show's popularity, *MAD Magazine* ran a series of "Pop-Off Video" takeoffs which mocked the artists, their fashions, their songs, and their music videos.

See also [edit]

- Culture note

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14. ^ "Pops They Stopped". Spin the Bottle at the Wayback Machine. Archived from the original on 1999-02-03. Retrieved 2007-01-03. Pellington was involved as the director of Jon Bon Jovi's "Midnight in Chelsea", while Mottola was referenced in the treatment of Mariah Carey's "Honey". The artists in question were still featured on later episodes, such as The Wallflowers with "Heroes" (Episode 108) and "6th Avenue Heartache" (Episode 135), and The Police with "Wrapped Around Your Finger" (Episode 122) and "Every Little Thing She Does Is Magic" (Episode 138).
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External links

[edit]

- Pop Up Video on VH1
- Spin the Bottle, Inc., *Pop Up Video's* original production company
- Eyeboogie, Inc., *Pop Up Video's* subsequent production company
- *Pop Up Video* at the Internet Movie Database

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