TV on the Internet

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MTV has MTV Overdrive, BET has BET on Blast and even Nickelodeon has TurboNick. These aren't TV branded energy drinks, but the networks' own online TV programming where viewers can watch the latest music videos and shows they may have missed during their regularly scheduled time on the air.

With today's Internet-savvy generation, it's no wonder that these channels would put their show lineup online. College students who miss "Lost" or "Desperate Housewives" because of their busy schedules can now catch them on www.abc.go.com when convenient.

"It's like having a show on demand," said Kate Chadwick, a Northeastern alumna. "You can easily catch up on the episodes you missed and because it's online it can also be a good study break."

Northeastern's TV channel, NUTV - which airs its own news program and original shows like "Campus Pulse," is completely online, and can be found on the community section of the myNEU web portal.

NUTV president Jonathan Cohn said online content is more convenient for students to watch and easier for NUTV to produce.

"Online TV is definitely better," Cohn said. "You don't have to wait. People can watch what they want, whenever they want."

Cohn also said there is a unique community aspect to it. On the NUTV channel and on other websites, like YouTube.com, viewers can not only watch different videos whenever they want, but also post comments about them on discussion boards.

"Most people watch regular TV alone," he said. "Going online, you could watch the same videos as other people and then give your own opinion on them."

Some Northeastern students are avid advocates of online TV content.

"It's great because there are less commercials than there would be on cable TV," said freshman business major Gina Bollenback, who has watched an episode of "Grey's Anatomy" online. "In the future if I miss a good show, I'll watch it online."

Sophomore international business major Enrico Ortiz agreed, citing its convenience.

"I tend to watch 'Heroes' or 'Lost' the day after they air online," he said. "It depends if I have a hectic meeting schedule that week."

Because of the emerging trend, online television websites are beginning to surface.

Richard Ayoub is the executive vice president of programming for ManiaTV, a 24/7 live Internet broadband website that Ayoub said contains MTV-like content, featuring music videos, celebrity gossip videos and comedy shows.

Because ManiaTV is online, it is beyond the reach of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), the governmental agency responsible for monitoring TV content. Jack E. Jett is the host of "Queer Edge," a talk show that has featured guests such as a man who strips down to a G-string while on a pogo-stick. Another episode involved a drag queen called 'Quesadilla' who hosts Tupperware parties.
Jett said the lack of censorship is what makes online TV so popular.

"I feel people are getting sick of cookie cutter television," he said. "Online TV is becoming an outlet for people who want to speak their mind without the FCC knocking at their door."

Ayoub said ManiaTV is the 13th fastest growing site on the web, with five million views per month.

Although online TV is more prevalent now, Ayoub said the days of gathering around a TV set aren't over yet.

"TV sets are too embedded into our culture," he said. "Even with online TV, people are still going to watch the game at bars, they're still going to watch talk shows live at the studio and they're still going to watch the screen that shows a live performing artist at the site of a concert."