

## **MTV and BET Programming Worse than Ever**

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(April 24, 2008) New data collected by media watchdogs reveals that daytime programming on two of the most popular television channels for tweens and teens - MTV and BET - is bombarding children with sexual, violent, profane or obscene content every 38 seconds.

The Parents Television Council (PTC), in partnership with the Enough is Enough Campaign, released shocking new data about BET and MTV daytime music video programming that found adult content on BET's Rap City and 106 & Park and MTV's Sucker Free during popular viewing times in late afternoon and early evening.

"What BET and MTV are offering to children on these three programs is full of offensive and vulgar content, the likes of which cannot yet be found on broadcast television," said PTC president Tim Winter.

"Being in the trenches fighting for better indecency enforcement and cable choice on behalf of millions of American families, we thought we'd seen it all - but even we were taken aback by what we found in the music video programs on MTV and BET that are targeted directly at impressionable children."

As of March, 2008, both channels were found to be assaulting children with content that is full of sexually charged images, explicit language, portrayals of violence, drug use, drug sales and other illegal activity.

Even more concerning to parents is that neither BET or MTV carried content descriptors that would work in conjunction with the V-Chip to block the programs from coming into the home or to warn parents about the presence of sexual content, suggestive dialogue, violence, or foul language.

"This is a major problem for parents who are told repeatedly to rely on their V-chips to protect their children," said Winter.

The report, which was prepared for the Enough is Enough Campaign, first analyzed adult content airing on BET's Rap City and 106 & Park and on MTV's Sucker Free on MTV for a two-week period in December 2007. The content analyzed was aired during afternoon or early evening hours, when many children are at home after school.

Because the research data from the December content contained a strikingly high volume and degree of adult-themed material, the PTC conducted an additional week of analysis on the same three programs in March 2008 for purposes of validation. The data revealed even higher levels of adult content in March 2008 than in December 2007.

The report found 59.9 instances of offensive/adult content per hour in their December analysis, a

figure that jumped to 95.8 instances per hour in March, 2008. This is compared to 12.5 instances of adult/offensive content per hour in broadcast TV Family Hour programming.

Sexually charged images make up 45 percent of the instances of adult content in these shows, followed by explicit language (29%), violence (13%), drug use/sales (9%) and other illegal activity (3%).

The PTC is suggesting several solutions.

First, parents need to be more involved in monitoring their children's media consumption, establishing and sticking to household rules about media use, and discussing media content with their children, Winter said. Advertisers of these shows must also be held accountable for the content of these programming their advertising dollars are supporting.

Second, consumers must demand and receive the right to pick and choose – and pay for – only the cable channels they want coming into their homes. “It is unconscionable that parents who wish to protect their children from this content are nonetheless forced to subsidize it with their cable subscription dollars,” Winter said.

“Finally, we must demand from the networks an accurate, transparent, and consistent ratings system that will give parents adequate tools to protect their children from inappropriate content.”

With a concerted effort from all, children can be protected from this kind of vile programming.

As Winter concluded: “It takes the courage of concerned citizens to speak out against destructive images on television and to see change happen.”

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