

Smart Swap

We told you back in September that the New Zealand Racing Board was planning to launch a second TV channel in December. Sure enough, the month is here and the new channel, **TAB TV**, will arrive next week (on the 16th of December), just in time for all those racing carnivals across Christmas and New Year.

In what we consider a really smart strategy, TAB TV will make its debut on Sky Digital Channel 35, the spectrum currently occupied by Trackside -- which means an automatic audience for the newcomer, as punters tune in to their usual channel to be greeted by the siren song of this new temptress.

Don't fret too much for Trackside, though -- it'll be only one channel away, on Channel 36. And that slot is being vacated this week by the Rugby Channel, which shuffles along to Channel 37.

As we noted earlier, TAB TV intends to broadcast approximately 12 races per hour, including local races and overseas races from Australia, France, Hong Kong, North America, Singapore, South Africa and the UK.

Trackside is already running on-screen promotions trailering its new stablemate. Clearly TV broadcasting is still profitable -- at least if you can offer bets based around the channel content. Anybody care to place a wager on the outcome of *'The Apprentice NZ'*? How about naming the survivors on *Outrageous Fortune*? Or betting on what *Lost* is really all about?

The Trade Me Top Ten for 2009

It's the time of year that many of us make lists (as does Santa, so behave!). Trade Me has made its own list, of the Top Ten auction listings of 2009 (defined in terms of total pageviews).

Leading the way: the scary washing machine, which attracted a staggering 806,220 pageviews and a final bid of \$5160. A mini-industry has since sprung up to (a) explain the success; and (b) duplicate it.

It is possible to use Trade Me effectively for marketing purposes -- but none of the Top Ten fall into that category. These are all one-off auctions that somehow caught the attention of the masses.

THE TOP TEN TRADE ME AUCTIONS OF 2009

1. **Scary washing machine**
2. **Tractor with free farm**
3. **John's cast-off** (the prime minister's arm cast)
4. **Jesus pita bread** (toasted pita bread that looked like Jesus)
5. **Diamond engagement ring** from cheating ex
6. **Roofliss** (Toyota Townace that crossed Cook Strait)
7. **Paris Hilton's boarding pass**
8. **Restaurant 181** (Wellington restaurant sold for a pittance to a mother and daughter who still couldn't make it work)
9. **Martin Jetpack** (jetpack test flight)
10. **Feijoa kiwi** (feijoa shaped like a kiwi)

Snippets

WAR OF THE WORDS

The Dom Post is reporting on yet another skirmish between Hybrid TV (local operators of TiVo, part-owned by TVNZ) and Sky, this time because of Sky's refusal to allow TiVo to publish Prime listings to its electronic programme guide. The opening paragraph suggests that "Hybrid Television may [include Prime programme listings on] TiVo's EPG without the permission of Sky".

We had to smile. Programme listing copyrights date back to the sixties and seventies, when television was state-owned and only the then-government-owned *NZ Listener* was allowed to publish television programme information more than a day in advance. That monopoly was broken, but only in return for a fee paid to the originating broadcaster.

Until now, that arrangement has suited operators -- as recently as April 2007, TVNZ spokeswoman Megan Richards told the NZ Herald "We will continue to charge other media where the [TV] listings are being used for commercial advantage." According to that 2007 article, "TVNZ, unlike TV3, Sky or other broadcasters, jealously guards its programme listings."

Irony. It's an acquired taste.

PLUS, ON OUR BLOG LAST WEEK:

NBR reveals website paid subscriber numbers

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