

What To Watch

Reality TV Has Gone To The Dogs...And Cats!



The reigning cats and dogs of a new animated “reality” TV show.

(NAPSA)—Reality-based television is a genre of entertainment that is known and loved (and hated) worldwide by millions of people. The idea behind reality programming is that it documents unscripted situations and occurrences, often featuring a cast of “everyday Joes.” Most think that reality TV started in the early 1990s and 2000s with shows like “Survivor.” The series, now with 30 seasons under its belt, was one of the first by Mark Burnett (“Survivor,” “The Voice,” “Shark Tank” and more), who helped define today’s modern reality series.

But television formats portraying ordinary people in unscripted situations are almost as old as the medium itself, thanks to innovators such as Allen Funt (“Candid Camera”) and Art Linkletter (“House Party”) and “Kids Say the Darndest Things”).

Today, this beloved format almost always includes the standard device known as the “confessional,” used by cast members to express their deepest thoughts on a given quandary, fellow castmates, and surroundings. Reality TV often puts people together deliberately, oddly matched, sometimes in a competition-type setting that puts these individuals head to head in situations that wouldn’t normally exist.

Other reality programming follows the same type of format, but often in a more “family” type of environment; where the audience gets to see how the “other half” lives. Remember “The Osbournes,” or “Nick & Jessica”? Phenoms that made jokes about “Chicken of the Sea” and “bleep” sounds over cursing a part of modern-day pop culture.

Whether it’s “American Idol,” “Keeping up with the Kardashians” or “Duck Dynasty,” many critics have lamented for years that reality television glamorizes materialistic and animalistic behavior. And now, starting in spring 2015, those claims are quite literal, with an animated reality show actually starring a band of cats and dogs called the “Talking Tom and Friends Series.”

This show, based on the mobile app franchise created by Outfit7 Ltd., stars an odd pairing of cats and dogs. This unlikely group of friends is on a journey to become reality TV stars by chronicling their adventures via their garage/app studio. Their unstoppable leader, Tom, believes that with this show, the gang is destined for fame and fortune.

The all-star voice cast brings to life the distinct personalities of these well-known cats and dogs. Tom: the charismatic and chaotic leader, voiced by Emmy- and Golden Globe®-nominated Colin Hanks (“Fargo” and “Orange County”). Hank: the lovable goofball voiced by Tom Kenny (“SpongeBob SquarePants” and “Adventure Time with Finn & Jake”). Ben: the brainy one voiced by James Adomian (“Comedy Bang! Bang!” and “Gravity Falls”). Angela: the glamorous and graciously flawed perfectionist voiced by Lisa Schwartz (“Not Cool”). And Ginger: the mischievous kid voiced by Maria Bamford (“WordGirl” and “Adventure Time with Finn & Jake”). It’s The Real World complete with fur and a tail.

This unorthodox clique is based on a series of 15 chart-topping apps, the first of which launched originally in 2010. These Friends boast over 2.6 billion downloads and 250 million active monthly users, and are now looking to entertain fans on even more screens with their new show. And what better way to do that than on the world’s biggest video-sharing platform, YouTube?

The prelude episode to the “Talking Tom and Friends Series,” “The Audition,” debuted on The Talking Tom and Friends YouTube channel (over 1.4 million subscribers strong) at the end of December 2014, to a fanfare of over 18 million views to date.

Episode 1, “Untalking Tom,” premieres April 30th on the YouTube channel and the YouTube Kids app, with new episodes airing weekly. The tribe has spoken; this show is one to watch!