

Hey, Look at Me!

Written by Smoke Signals
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We're sure there are some readers of this space who are fans of reality TV shows. We'd also guess there are many more who can't stand those shows - but we'd probably all agree, that reality TV is huge.

We're not talking about Storage Wars or Pawn Stars or some of the shows on Food Network. We're talking about shows that follow the lives of people who would be otherwise uninteresting - or completely meaningless - if they weren't on television doing off-the-wall things for the camera. We're talking about shows focusing on uneducated duck hunters and brain-dead socialites and anyone named Kardashian.

We don't want to sound sexist, but ratings research shows that the audiences for these shows are primarily female and relatively young. And when you team that with the fact that the heaviest users of Facebook are young females, you can draw some rudimentary conclusions and make some probably unfair generalizations about young women in the year 2012. As you've probably guessed, we have done just that. And our probably unfair generalization is that many not only enjoy watching the intimate "inside story" of peoples' lives - they enjoy sharing their own.

Why is this something we felt the need to share? It's because we've been trying to understand a development in the smoking fetish world that has taken on a life of its own.

As you're no doubt well aware, the number of young women who post self-shot videos of themselves smoking to YouTube has increased dramatically over the last year or so. Some are well done, while some are so amateurish that you can't even really tell that the ladies are actually smoking. But the number keeps increasing.

We, of course, have noticed this trend. And it occurred to us that there might be an opportunity there for everyone. We could make suggestions as far as camera angles, lighting and so on, the

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videos could be posted on one of our sites, and the female smokers could benefit by sharing in revenue raised from displaying the videos.

So we approached some of the young women posting to YouTube, and offered them the opportunity to make some money from the smoking videos they're currently displaying for free. Most didn't bother to explain why, but the overall response was "thanks, but no thanks." The impression we got that either the women didn't want to bother with any extra steps in posting their videos, or that they just weren't interested in making money from their videos. The exposure was all they were really interested in.

We'll leave it to more astute armchair psychologists to take this a step further, in understanding why money is of no interest to these ladies. But if any astute armchair psychologists were to say "It's because they're only interested in the attention, and since they won't be getting their own reality shows any time in the near future and probably won't even have a chance to appear on Tosh.0, this is the closest they'll come to their fifteen minutes of fame" - we wouldn't disagree.

It's a shame, not only because we saw a business opportunity but because we saw an opportunity to improve the quality of some of the self-shot video that's out there. But that's one more change in our world at which we can only shake our heads.

Anyone want to bankroll a smoking reality series? THAT one might fly.

Enjoy the May-June issue!