

## Reality – Competitions, Relationships, and Makeovers

The biggest programming trend this decade, of course, has been the influx of reality shows.

It's not really accurate to even call this a single genre. **American Idol, Survivor, The Bachelor, Amazing Race, The Apprentice, Extreme Makeover: Home Edition, The Biggest Loser, Dancing With the Stars, The Marriage Ref,** and **Undercover Boss** for example, have virtually nothing in common.

Still most prevalent during the summer—as a less expensive way of scheduling original series year-round, as well as being a testing ground for potential regular-season series—reality/game shows are now mainstays of the broadcast networks' regular-season schedules.



This trend started when **Who Wants to be a Millionaire** debuted in August 1999 (with 13 episodes), and demonstrated that large numbers of viewers can be had for something new in the summer. This started to change the way the broadcast networks programmed the summer months (and led to reality series seeping into the fall schedule).



During the summer of 2000, ABC aired 46 episodes of **Millionaire** (mostly on Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday). CBS had an even bigger hit with 13 episodes of **Survivor**, and more moderate success with 70 telecasts of **Big Brother** (which aired every night of the week except Sunday). This dramatically reduced the number of repeats these networks aired, and also served to improve ratings.

In the summer of 2001, ABC aired another 46 episodes of **Millionaire**, while CBS had 29 of **Big Brother** (**Survivor** was now being saved exclusively for the regular season).

NBC, late to the reality/game craze, joined in with a vengeance, airing 17 telecasts of **Fear Factor** (which became a fall hit), 23 episodes of **Spy TV**