

Korean peace deal signed Netflix, telcos end years of bitter wrangling

Korean telco giant SK Telecom and Netflix have ended years of bitter wrangling over broadband network usage fees, today unveiling a multi-layered bundling and tech partnership the companies say is designed "to enhance customers' entertainment experience".

Financial details of the agreement, which ends all disputes between the companies, were not disclosed.

The first products from the new alliance, which may eventually include SK Telecom/Broadband's AI technologies, will be released from the first half of 2024.

The companies said today (18 Sept) that the treaty puts SK and Netflix on a path to "collaborate as partners for the future".

"This mutual decision stems from both parties' shared foundational principle that prioritises customers," they said.

The agreement enables customised products across mobile and IPTV, including easier access/payment options, as well as product bundles.

Today's deal also includes additional Netflix bundles for SK Telecom's subscription service, T Universe, as well as the intention to introduce services combined with Netflix's ad-supported price plan.

No details were disclosed.

The AI technologies developed by SK Telecom and SK Broadband include conversational UX and personalised recommendation technologies.

Similar partnerships look like they're part of SK Telecom's roadmap.

The company said it would "continue its journey to transform into an AI company by collaborating with other global companies through strategic partnerships".

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India's premium commissions continue



Tanaav's Manav Vij, Fauda's Lior Raz

India's ongoing quest for premium streaming titles continues, led this month so far by Netflix's Yash Raj Films' (YRF) multi-year creative deal running alongside the return of yes Studios' scripted format *Fauda* for a second season with Applause Entertainment for SonyLiv.

The first YRF project is four-part thriller, *The Railway Men*, based on the Bhopal gas leak. The series is directed by newcomer Shiv Rawail.

The second, *Maharaj*, directed by Sidharth P. Malhotra (*Hichki*) and marking the debut of actor Junaid Khan, is a David vs Goliath story set in the 1800s about a journalist and an expose that shakes the foundation of society.

Details of the India version of *Fauda*, *Tanaav*, remain under wraps.

These follow the August announcement during the ContentAsia Summit of an upsized season of Warner Bros Discovery/Banjay Asia's *Star Vs Food* led by chef Ranveer Brar. *Star Vs Food: Survival* features Suniel Shetty, Sanjay Dutt, Aparshakti Khurana, Mouni Roy and Nakul Mehta.

A+E tips global sale for new K-drama

Streaming platform for 11 Oct premiere not disclosed



Cha Eun-woo and Park Kyu-young in *A Good Day to be a Dog*

A+E Networks has sold MBC's Korean drama, fantasy romance *A Good Day to be a Dog*, to a global streaming service, but in today's announcement declined to disclose the platform.

The show premieres in Korea on 11 October on free-TV broadcast network MBC as well as the Lifetime Korea channel.

The premium drama series is part of A+E's refocus of its Asia operation announced earlier this year.

The restructure involves shrinking its Singapore-based Southeast Asia channels team to less than half and upping focus on its businesses in Korea and Japan.

As part of the shift, managing director Saugato "Shoggy" Banerjee exits at the end of this month.

A Good Day to be a Dog is Youngsun Soh's first major content announcement since being upped to A+E Korea's senior vice president and managing director in July this year from her previ-


ous role as general manager, Korea, and regional head of digital business development.

A+E's original production/investment business includes scripted shows such as hospice K-drama *If You Wish Upon Me* (2022); romcom *Woori the Virgin* (2022) and *Backstreet Rookie* (2020); and comedy series *Dramaworld* (2016).

A+E says *A Good Day to be a Dog* will premiere globally on 11 Oct at the same time as Korea.

Produced by Group8 and directed by Dae-Woong Kim, *A Good Day to be a Dog*, unveiled in August, stars Cha Eun-woo (*Island*, *True Beauty*) and Park Kyu-young (*Celebrity*) in a webtoon-based story about a young woman who turns into a dog at midnight whenever she kisses someone. The only person who can break the curse is a man afraid of dogs.

MBC TV will air the 14-episode series on Wednesdays at 9pm.



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MPA's APOS returns to Bali, Uday Shankar leads two-day agenda

Bodhi Tree Systems Uday Shankar opens this year's APOS conference in Bali (27-28 Sept), leading an agenda heavy on the future of streaming and the evolution of platforms and entertainment.

In his first appearance at APOS since exiting Disney at the end of 2020, Shankar will speak about the future of entertainment and sports in India and the role of India's Jio Cinema and its future strategy across content and technology.

Media Partners Asia's (MPA) executive director, Vivek Couto, kicks off the two-day agenda on Wednesday (27 Sept) with his traditional state-of-the-industry overview and analysis.

"This year's Summit takes place at a time when macroeconomic volatility combined with the impact of technology and growing importance of scale continues to disrupt leading Asia Pacific entertainment economies and companies in their post-pandemic phase of growth. This is leading to a sharpened focus on areas where value can be best created for consumers, advertisers, and shareholders," Couto says.

Highlights of this year's two-day agenda include a conversation with Viu CEO/PCCW Media Group MD, Janice Lee, in her first appearance since the US\$300-million Canal+ deal announced in June this year; Indonesia insights from Emtel MD/Surya Citra Media and Vidio CEO, Sutanto Hartono, followed on day two by a session with MD Pictures' Manoj Punjabi, Falcon's HB Naveen, and Screenplay Films' Wicky Olindo; and a session with the region's top pay-TV operators, including Astro's Euan Smith and Tata Play's Harit Nagpal.

Netflix and Prime Video take centre stage on day two, with a look at the next phase of Japanese entertainment with Kaata Sakamoto, Netflix's Japan content VP; and an outline of Prime Video's strategy with APAC VP, Gaurav Gandhi, SE Asia director David Simonsen; and India/SE Asia head of originals, Aparna Purohit.

Visinema expands global ambitions Sasongko on a mission to transcend "passion projects"

Indonesian film producer, Visinema, has upsize its expansion strategy, continuing the mission to stretch IP development beyond feature films and fast-tracking its broader approach to storytelling.

The initiative includes the recent appointment of former Disney exec Herry Salim to lead IP development and brand partnerships out of Jakarta along with adding tech entrepreneur Aldi Haryoprato to its board.

For now, Visinema's international footprint is still largely film based, and most visible this month at the Busan International Film Festival, where it has two features – *Ali Topan*, a co-production Kebon Studio, which screens in the "A Window on Asian Cinema" section and *24 Jam With Gaspar*, a co-production with KawanKawan Media, which is the only title from Indonesia to compete for Busan's Kim Ji Seok Award .

"Our ambition has always been to push Indonesia's creative industry forward," says Visinema founder and chief executive, Angga Sasongko.

"Indonesia isn't merely a market for global entertainment; it has the potential to be a global storytelling hub," he adds.

Perhaps the best examples of the push beyond films are theatrical release *Nussa* (2021), developed from a web series; and feature film, *Keluarga Cemara*,

which was adapted into a TV series in the early days of Disney+ Hotstar. Other projects include *Jalan Yang Jauh Jangan Lupa Pulang* (2023/Netflix) and *Tumbal Kenjeng Iblis* (2023/Prime Video).

Sasongko talks about "infinite possibilities for our stories to transcend mediums to become beloved IPs by fans all over Indonesia", and has high hopes for new project, *Jumbo*, an animated feature that addressed critical issues for children. Details have not been confirmed.

Sasongko identified two catalysts for Indonesia's ascendance to global storytelling status: strategic global partnerships and funding.

Already collaborating with streaming platforms including Netflix and Prime Video, he says the international film festival circuit will also "help shed more spotlight on Indonesia's stories and talent".

Additional alliances are in the works "to further our global footprint".

The other key requirement is funding. "Previously, investments in Indonesia's film industry were considered 'passion projects' with limited financial upside," he says.

"However," he adds, "we've proven that a strong business model can transform storytelling projects into a profitable sustainable venture. As funding grows, so will our ability to diversify stories and extend our global reach".



From Left:
Herry Salim,
Angga Sasongko
and Aldi
Haryoprato

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Dystopia, magic & crime drive new webtoon-based TV projects

Momo Film, Bros Studios, Kenaz kick off new alliance, two titles in development

When Seoul/LA-based Bros Studios, Korean webtoon platform Kenaz and Singapore's Momo Film joined forces, yet another set of hopes, dreams and ambitions joined today's most popular quest: producing "international content".

The three companies plan to turn Kenaz's webtoons into television series, beginning with *Mirror Game* and *All About Money*.

Mirror Game is about a master illusionist with ill intentions who becomes a viral sensation after successfully hypnotising people online.

In *All About Money*, three best friends unexpectedly come across a billion dollars and are thrown into the illicit world of crime and corruption.

Both titles were chosen for what Momo co-founder and producer, Si En Tan, feels is their international potential, putting Momo on the same gold-rush trajectory as thousands of others striving to connect with audiences globally (aka sell to Netflix or Amazon's Prime Video).

Just off two Golden Leopard wins in Locarno and as Momo's latest feature, *Budi Pekerti*, premiered at this year's Toronto International Film Festival, Tan says *Mirror Game*, reminiscent of *Alice in Borderland*, "has a compelling premise with good visual potential with its dystopian plot and magical elements".

In addition to millions of views in Korea, *Mirror Game* is also popular in France and Turkey. This, she adds, underscores its international appeal.

She chose *All About Money* because of its pace and high action. "This IP combines what we all love about K-drama and international hit shows, with great visual potential and engaging audiences with depictions of the criminal world," Tan says.

Development on the two titles has begun, and the projects – Momo's first foray into webtoon-based development – should be ready to pitch before the end of the year.

These follow newly minted partner Kenaz's webtoon-based Boys Love (BL)



From left: Woody Lee, Kenaz; Joseph Jang, Bros Studios; Si En Tan, Momo Films

dramas, including *The Director Who Buys Me Dinner* and *Blooming*.

Kenaz's CEO/founder, Woody Lee, says the company has been working on globalising its IP for about 18 months.

This is part of a worldwide excavation of manga and webtoon stories to remake for streaming platforms that has, among others, resulted in *Drops of God* (Apple TV+), *Death Note* (originally for Nippon TV), and a slew for Netflix... *Alice in Borderland*, *All of Us are Dead*, *Sweet Home*, *Itaewon Class*...

Lee describes this moment in time as "the golden age of webtoons being expanded into movies and dramas".

But there's not a clear line to success. "The most important thing for us is to respect the original webtoon and expand the world view at the same time. A lot of times, fans of the webtoon expect the same exact thing [from the TV series]," he says.

"We are very focused on making our

very Korean webtoons into a global universe. We want to keep what's very Korean but also make it relatable for a global audience," he adds.

Joseph Jang, co-founder of Bros Studio, talks about translating "fantastic worlds" and "universal themes" of webtoons for global audiences, and the challenge of translating stories created for smartphones in a swipe-up environment, "where there are no limitations".

The two new projects are backed by Beach House Pictures (*Mr Midnight*, *The Raincoat Killer*), which is already working with Bros on various non-scripted projects.

Bros, which has partnered with Kenaz on its global strategy, is the bridge between Kenaz and Momo. BHP acquired a majority stake in Momo in November 2021.

Jang talks about an entertainment environment beyond Korean drama. "We are in the golden age of not just of Korean content, but of Asian content in general," he says. – Sara Merican/Janine Stein.

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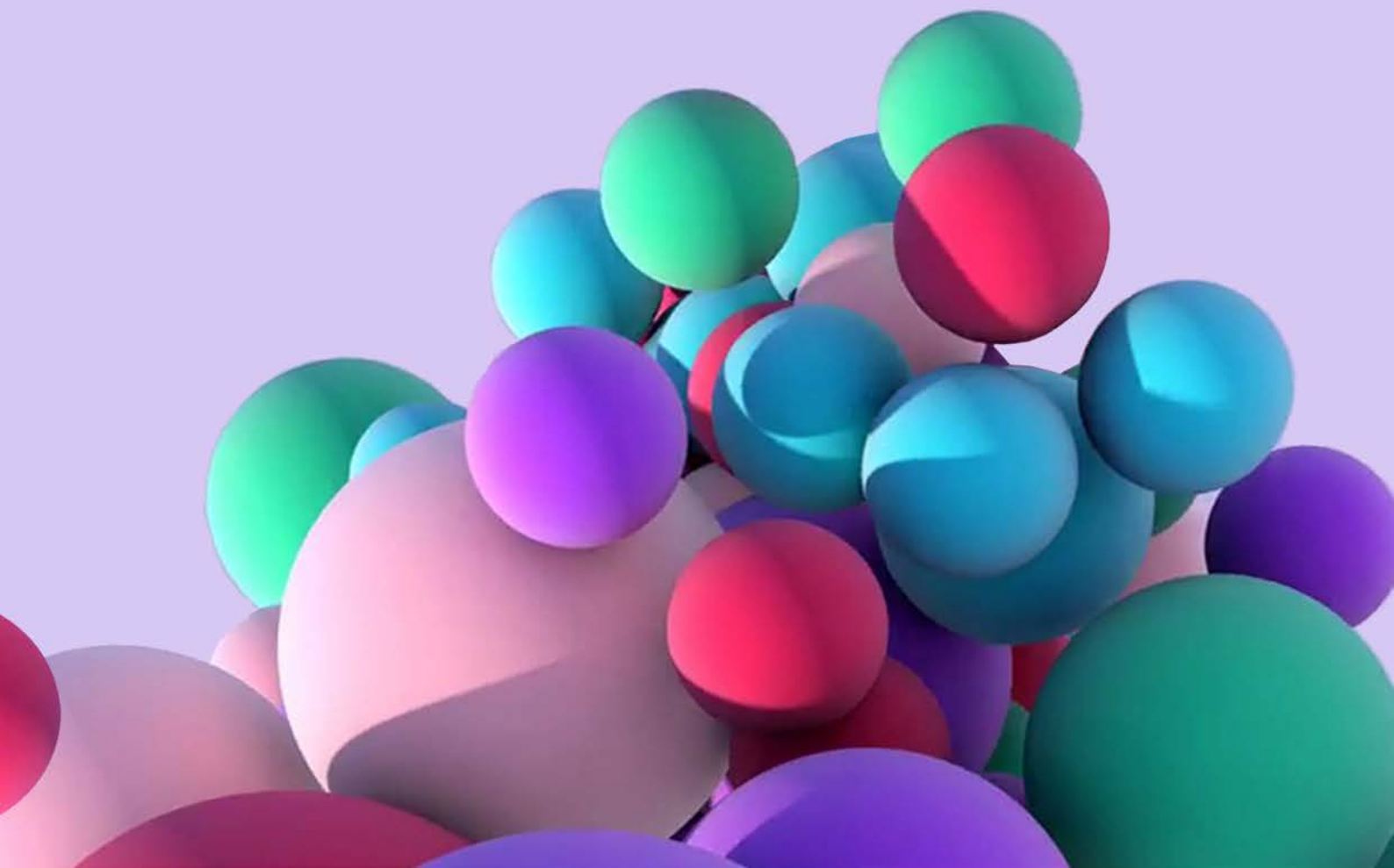
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The biggest impact for us is not the exit of Fox or Star, it's the new [tech/entertainment] world... consumers will always want more, newer, sooner, even something uncut. In a linear world, that's impossible. Our app, launching in the second quarter of 2024, will be 100% dedicated to Chinese content from China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore... content audiences have never seen before, something a little edgier."



Ofanny Choi, CEO of Celestial Tiger Entertainment, on the significant forces shaping Chinese video entertainment.



We're not fighting with people changing channels, we're fighting with the remote control's fast-forward button... We're not talking about a 16-episode series for TV. We're talking about six episodes, eight episodes, content that's fast-paced and more intense... if we're talking about new trends, we're talking about audiences from streaming. That's the trend."



Apicha Honghirunruang, President, BEC Studio (Thailand)



The three most significant forces shaping Chinese video entertainment are: platforms of course, government funding and talents... Government funding is a key element nowadays. It's possible to get 30% to 40% funding from the government in Taiwan, either in investment or grants. There's funding from Singapore's IMDA, from Malaysia, and lately even the Hong Kong government has realised that they must invest more in content as well... governments in Asia are one of the key investors in the content industry now."



Cora Yim, Chief Content Officer and Co-Founder, Sixty Percent Productions (Taiwan)



By building a factual entertainment pipeline, “we help grow the market as a whole. So we’re not just building talent and IP from India, we’re partnering with people in Southeast Asia, in the U.K., in the U.S. We’re working with global talent, local talent, talent that can cut across. We’re working with anyone and everyone who has ideas that could work in the market, but it is in the effort to build out the whole region, not just for ourselves. So there’s more for everyone and that helps build the category.”



Sai Abishek, Head of Factual & Lifestyle Cluster, South Asia,
Warner Bros Discovery



A big mission always starts off with a very small step...Four to five years back we started with a combined vision of wanting to break through in the factual entertainment space... people want alternatives. In addition to scripted and unscripted, what's a third pillar we could build? The first big dib we took was a show with [India's] Prime Minister Narendra Modi [*Man Vs Wild with Bear Grylls* and *Prime Minister Modi*, 2019]. And then it was for us to carry this forward, to really build it out, with big Indian legends like Rajinikanth and Akshay Kumar. Obviously this was a great start, but it's just the start... we are creating that bandwidth, we are creating an ecosystem to encourage people."

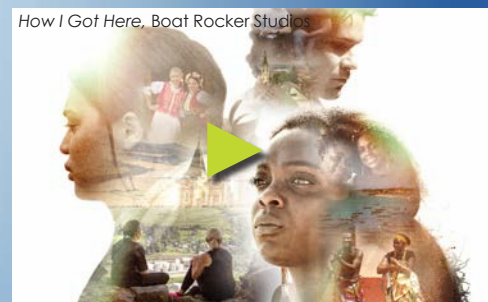
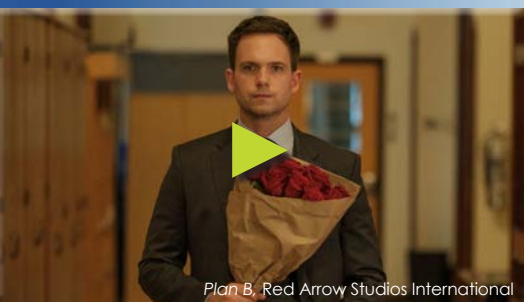
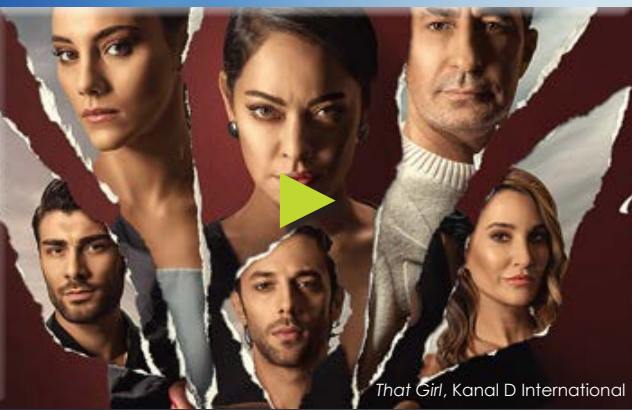


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September 2023	26-28	APOS 2023	Bali, Indonesia
October 2023	7-10	Asian Contents & Film Market 2023	Korea
	10	AVIA: Thailand in View 2023	Bangkok, Thailand
	13-15	MipJunior 2023	Cannes, France
	16-19	Mipcom 2023	Cannes, France
	25-27	TIFFCOM 2023	Tokyo, Japan
November 2023	7-12	Taiwan Creative Content Fest 2023	Taipei, Taiwan
	22-23	Dubai International Content Market 2023	Madinat Jumeirah, Dubai
December 2023	5	AVIA: OTT Summit 2023	Singapore
	6	AVIA: Piracy Over the Top 2023	Singapore
	6-8	Asia TV Forum & Market (ATF) 2023	Singapore
	6-8	14th Content Tokyo	Tokyo, Japan
March 2024	3-6	Australian International Documentary Conference (AIDC)	Melbourne, Australia
	11-14	Hong Kong International Film & TV Market 2024	Hong Kong
	19-21	Series Mania Forum 2024	Lille, France
April 2024	12-17	Canneseries 2024	Cannes, France
	15-17	Mip TV/Mip Formats/Mip Doc/Mip Drama 2024	Cannes, France
May 2024	29-31	BroadcastAsia/CommunicAsia 2024	Singapore
June 2024	6-8	Telefilm Vietnam 2024	Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
	17-18	DW Global Media Forum 2024	Bonn, Germany
	24-27	Sunny Side of the Doc 2024	France
July 2024	3-5	15th Content Tokyo	Tokyo, Japan
August 2024	20-21	ContentAsia Summit 2024	
	22	ContentAsia Awards 2024	

Ahsoka tops Hong Kong demand

Viewers across multiple streamers – Parrot Analytics

U.S. sci-fi action adventure series, *Ahsoka* (aka *Star Wars: Ahsoka*), dominated demand in Hong Kong in a digital environment split pretty much evenly for the week of 5-11 September between four global streaming platforms – Disney+, Netflix, Apple TV+, Paramount+ – with single-title presence on the week's top 10 of Prime Video and Hulu.

Data science company Parrot Analytics shows *Ahsoka* as the only TV title that

hit 20 x demand of the average show the platform measures in Hong Kong.

Netflix's *One Piece* (#1 on Netflix for the week of 4-10 September) was a clear second with demand just above 15 x average, followed by *Sesame Street* on the overall list and Apple TV+'s *Foundation* on the digital originals top 10.

Sesame Street was one of four kids shows on the overall top 10 for the week.

Top 10 overall TV shows: Hong Kong

Rank	Title	Difference from Market Average
1	<i>Ahsoka</i>	20.52x
2	<i>One Piece</i>	15.19x
3	<i>Sesame Street</i>	12.61x
4	<i>Coachella</i>	12.59x
5	<i>Peppa Pig</i>	12.55x
6	<i>Foundation</i>	12.26x
7	<i>The Last Of Us</i>	12.13x
8	<i>Bluey</i>	11.24x
9	<i>Jujutsu Kaisen (呪術廻戦)</i>	11.09x
10	<i>Bebefinn</i>	11.06x

Top 10 digital originals: Hong Kong

Rank	Title	Platform	Difference from Market Average
1	<i>Ahsoka</i>	Disney+	20.52x
2	<i>One Piece</i>	Netflix	15.19x
3	<i>Foundation</i>	Apple TV+	12.26x
4	<i>Bebefinn</i>	Netflix	11.06x
5	<i>Ted Lasso</i>	Apple TV+	10.92x
6	<i>Star Trek: Strange New Worlds</i>	Paramount+	9.64x
7	<i>Special Ops: Lioness</i>	Paramount+	8.99x
8	<i>The Mandalorian</i>	Disney+	8.78x
9	<i>Only Murders In The Building</i>	Hulu	8.78x
10	<i>The Wheel Of Time</i>	Prime Video	7.93x

Date range: 5-11 September 2023

The total audience demand being expressed for a title, within a market. Audience demand reflects the desire, engagement and viewership, weighted by importance; so a stream/download is a higher expression of demand than a 'like'/comment. In this dataset we are comparing the demand that exists for each series in this market, against the average TV show. A difference of 1x represents the market average and 10x means a series is ten times more in demand than the average TV show in this market.



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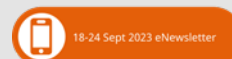
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