



Syfy Rebrands as Science Fiction Content Hub

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As E! is to entertainment and pop culture, as ESPN is to sports, so Syfy aims to be to science fiction.

The network's rebrand that rolled out Monday is really more of an overhaul, with a new logo and typeface across all linear and digital platforms, expanded programming and, perhaps most importantly, a renewed focus on the concept of fandom driven by its revamped news division, Syfy Wire.

"This is our crown jewel," said Alexandra Shapiro, EVP, marketing and digital, USA and Syfy for NBCUniversal. "It's the brand engine that fuels everything we do."

Syfy rebranded its existing news website Blastr, essentially supercharging it by quadrupling staff and article output, and "instead of it living off on an island," bringing it to Syfy's homepage to educate and inspire viewers about all things science fiction-not just the network's shows. That, she says, is where Syfy's future lies.

"Our focus has been singularly on our own IP," Shapiro said.

But Syfy Wire represents a shift in focus, opening the network's aperture to

everything in the science-fiction genre: games and technology; fantasy and films; supernatural horror and superheroes; and of course, television. It allows Syfy to insert itself into, or lead, conversations that previously had no place in the network's branding, delivering breaking genre news, in-depth analysis and thought-provoking original content.

"We're bigger than ourselves now," Shapiro said.

As an article on Syfy Wire explaining the updated look of the news site puts it:

"We eat dragon fire and breathe warp exhaust. We're a place for fans to come together, learn more about the shows, comics and movies they love, debate the finer points of canon, and dive into everything there is to love about robots, zombies, aliens, wizards, superheroes, and everything in between."

With that in mind, Syfy launched the campaign handle "It's A Fan Thing" that highlights the lengths to which people will go to express their fandom, and the network's willingness to engage audiences with content related to AMC's *The Walking Dead* as much as its own series *Wynonna Earp*.

Yet as Syfy beefs up its genre content to geek out and engage with viewers, "the hope is we always migrate them back to the mothership," Shapiro said, with the network continuing to highlight its own titles when relevant.

And the network is expanding its programming with series pickups that include Superman prequel *Krypton*, and the graphic novel adaptation *Happy!* along with *Nightflyers*, based on the George R.R. Martin novella.

This rebrand also falls just in time for the network's 25th anniversary in September.

Syfy worked with creative agency 72andSunny to research the past two and a half decades, and come up with a brand positioning that could serve as its North Star. The decision to focus on fandom stems from the growing popularity of science fiction and fantasy over the last five years, to the point where the genre has become more mainstream than niche. Ten out of the 20 top-grossing films last year fell into that category, Shapiro said.

The rebrand took eight months and although it was happening regardless of the network's 25th anniversary, the celebration in September generated a sense of urgency, bringing "clarity and focus we may not have had otherwise," Shapiro said.

Syfy also worked with branding agency loyalkaspar for the design elements including the blocky new logo and font in a color Shapiro calls "grelow."

The distinct typeface works across all linear and digital platforms for creative flexibility, and establishes a digital identity for the network, similar to how readers of the New York Times or Wired can immediately recognize the custom fonts of those organizations.

"We wanted to create that same thing for Syfy," Shapiro said.

As the network moves forward in this new direction, it also means paying more attention to key performance indicators in digital metrics and social engagement realms.

"How we use data to inform our content creation will be critical," Shapiro said. Syfy eventually hopes to not just extend an editorial wink through curated content and capitalizing on cultural moments, but to truly engage with science fiction aficionados by creating platforms for expressions such as fan art and fanfiction, becoming an ever-growing important service in their lives.

But that, Shapiro says, is part of phase two.

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