

Boxed In: Women on Screen and Behind the Scenes in the 2006-07 Prime-time Season

by Martha M. Lauzen, Ph.D.

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The percentages of women on screen and behind the scenes in prime-time television reached recent historical highs during the 2006-07 season.

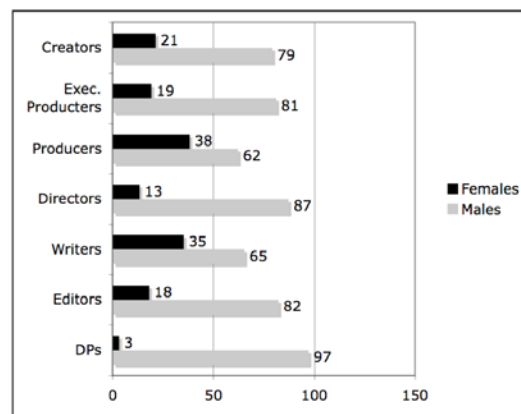
Women comprised 26% of all creators, executive producers, producers, directors, writers, editors, and directors of photography working on situation comedies, dramas, and reality programs. This percentage represents an increase of two percentage points from last season. Women writers and producers enjoyed a particularly good year. The percentage of women writers increased from 29% in 2005-06 to 35% in 2006-07. The percentage of women producers increased from 33% in 2005-06 to 38% in 2006-07.

On screen, female characters accounted for 42% of all characters. This represents an increase of two percentage points over the 2005-06 season. However, female characters continue to be younger than their male counterparts. For example, 70% of all characters in their 40s and 71% of all characters in their 50s were male. Women 40 and older comprised 9% of all characters. In contrast, men 40 and older accounted for 20% of all characters.

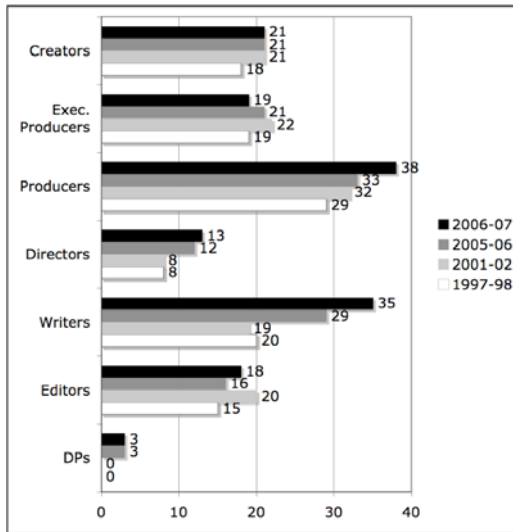
Findings/Behind the Scenes

- This study examined 2,116 individuals working behind the scenes on one randomly selected episode of every prime-time drama, situation comedy, and reality program airing on ABC, CBS, CW, NBC, and Fox.
- The representation of behind-the-scenes women did not vary significantly by program genre. In other words, 27% of individuals working behind the scenes on situation comedies, 26% of those working on dramas, and 24% of those working on reality programs were female.
- Overall, women fared best as producers (38%), followed by writers (35%), creators (21%), executive producers (19%), editors (18%), directors (13%), and directors of photography (3%) (see Figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1.
Percent of Behind-the-Scenes Women and Men during the 2006-07 Season



*Figure 2.
Historical Comparison of
Percentages of Behind-the-Scenes
Employment of Women*



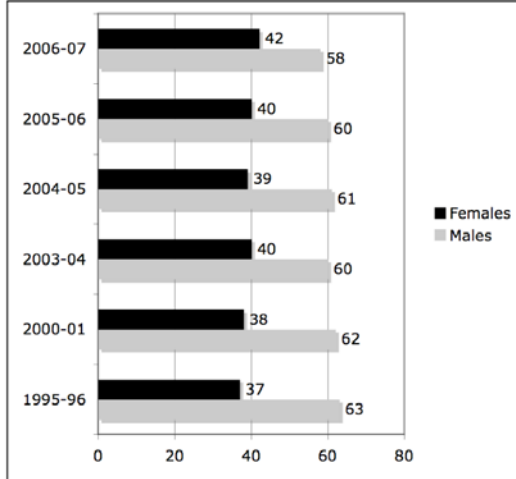
- Programs airing on the CW employed more behind-the-scenes women than any other network. Thirty five percent (35%) of behind-the-scenes individuals at the CW were women, followed by 31% at ABC, 25% at CBS, 23% at NBC, and 18% at Fox.
- Women comprised 21% of creators. Eighty percent (80%) of the programs considered had no women creators.
- Women accounted for 19% of executive producers. Thirty seven percent (37%) of the programs considered had no women executive producers.
- Women comprised 38% of producers. Only 13% of the programs considered had no women producers.

- Women accounted for 13% of directors. Eighty nine percent (89%) of the programs considered had no women directors.
- Women comprised 35% of writers. Sixty five percent (65%) of the programs considered had no women writers.
- Women accounted for 18% of editors. Seventy two percent (72%) of the programs considered had no women editors.
- Women comprised 3% of directors of photography. Ninety seven percent (97%) of the programs considered had no women directors of photography.

Findings/On Screen

- This study examined 2,090 characters appearing on one randomly selected episode of every drama, situation comedy, and reality program airing on ABC, CBS, CW, NBC, and Fox during the 2006-07 prime-time season.
- Females accounted for 42% and males 58% of all characters (see Figure 3). Females comprised 42% and males 58% of major characters.
- Programs airing on the CW featured the highest percentage of female characters (48%), followed by ABC (46%), Fox (42%), NBC (39%), and CBS (39%).

*Figure 3.
Comparison of Percentages of
Female and Male Characters
On Prime-time Programs*



- Female characters were overwhelmingly white (76%), followed by African-Americans (13%), Latinas (4%), and Asians (4%).
- Female characters were more likely than males to be identified by their marital status.

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- Overall, female characters were significantly younger than their male counterparts. Seventy percent (70%) of all characters in their 40s and 71% of all characters in their 50s were male. Women 40 and older comprised 9% of all characters. In contrast, men 40 and older accounted for 20% of all characters.