# ‘Gossip Girl’ Creator Discusses Ratings

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**Josh Schwartz tackles show’s low Nielsen numbers**

*By Matthew B. Zeidman*

**NEW YORK (RPRN/Hollywood Today) 3/24/09** – Since its TV premiere in 2007, cult hit “Gossip Girl” has been flush with sex, controversy and viewer buzz, but it’s consistently struggled to raise Nielsen ratings to levels easily attained by shows that barely make a blip on the pop culture radar.

In the April 2 issue of “Rolling Stone,” which features two of the drama’s comely co-stars (Blake Lively and Leighton Meester) posing suggestively on the cover with a rapidly melting ice cream cone, show creator and teen drama guru Josh Schwartz took the time to address the statistical disparity.

“We’d wake up in the morning [after broadcast] and look at the ratings and say, ‘Wow, that’s pretty low,’” Schwartz told the magazine. “But then you’d hear people talk about the show and you’d think, ‘This is weird.’ The reaction to the show feels much larger than the audience.”

In an attempt to raise the show’s ratings and woo potential advertisers, the CW Network discontinued free access to full-length episodes on its Web site last April, but allowed Apple’s retail juggernaut, iTunes, to continue to offer paid downloads.

While “Gossip Girl” episodes continue to rank in iTunes’ top 10 TV downloads each week, conventional ratings remain low, with only 20-25 percent of the audience that tunes into top-rated reality show “American Idol.” The show’s producers have previously blamed Internet and group viewing for the low ratings.

**About the author:**
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