

The Star Economy

Most Overexposed Celebrities

Lacey Rose, 03.26.08, 6:00 PM ET

Not all press is good press, no matter what the publicists say.

Consider celebute Paris Hilton, whose every move from club hopping to friend feuding has grabbed gobs of tabloid ink. But rather than adoration for the *Simple Life* star, the media onslaught has resulted in eye rolls--and worse.

According to studies by Los Angeles-based [E-Poll Market Research](#), which provides appeal rankings for more than 3,000 celebrities, 70% of the U.S. population would use the term "overexposed" to describe Hilton, up slightly from a year earlier.

To put that in perspective, most celebrities average between 3% and 7% at the peak of their careers.

[In Pictures: The Most Overexposed Celebrities](#)

[Video: Tinseltown's Most Overexposed Stars](#)

But Hilton isn't the only star to have worn out her public welcome. Among others of whom audiences have tired: Britney Spears, Lindsay Lohan and the ever-present Olsen twins.

While overexposure may have less to do with the precise number of headlines than with the public's perception of the celebrity, the 15 stars on our list have proved that familiarity can--and does--breed contempt.

So who's to blame? The stars or the tabloids that cover them?

E-Poll Chief Executive Gerry Philpott says the press can only build somebody up or tear somebody down so much. He argues that the 24/7 attention provided by the Internet expedites the fame trajectory--and the exposure that comes along with it.

The result: "You can go from zero to 60 in exposure like that," he says. "And, for that matter, 60 to zero."

Take *The Hills* bad boy Spencer Pratt, who comes in at No. 11 on our list. When we ran this list last year, the general public knew little of the MTV reality star or the feuds he caused.

Fast-forward to 2008, and the controversial beau of Heidi Montag, best friend turned enemy of *The Hills* star Lauren Conrad, is headlining both the glossies and the blogs, even scoring an advice column in *Radar* magazine.

That kind of attention can be a turnoff for some stars, especially those like Tom Cruise or Lindsay Lohan, who are looking for respect as artists.

But for others, like Pratt and Montag, overexposure may not be a bad thing, opines Jake Halpern, author of *Fame Junkies: The Hidden Truth Behind America's Favorite Addiction*. For these stars, Halpern says, it's all they have. And more important, without it they cease to be celebrities.

"You're only a celebrity as long as you're in the dialogue of popular culture," he explains. And if you don't have your work, be it a movie or album, to keep you in that dialogue, you are forced to rely on exposure.

Former Playboy Playmate Pamela Anderson, who ranks fourth on our list, is another example. Without the acting career she hoped would take off--Anderson's most recent flick, *Blond and Blonder*, bombed--it's her tabloid presence care of multiple marriages (and divorces) and provocative ways that continues to open doors for her celebrity.

"For certain celebrities, it becomes almost a survival instinct," says *US Weekly* Editor in Chief Janice Min. "And after a period of time out of the press, there's sort of a hunger or craving to get back in."

But how easy is it to win back the people's favor, and thus the press', once you've lost it?

Very, according to Philpott. "In this country, we love to build people up, tear them down and then build them back up again," he says.

But Ellis Cashmore, author of *Celebrity Culture*, argues that staging a comeback is far easier for some than it is for others. The dividing point, he claims, is talent. And without it, he questions what the celebrity can come back with.

[In Pictures: The Most Overexposed Celebrities](#)