

Researching Binge-Watching

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Abstract

This piece gives an overview of the different ways binge-watching is explored and analysed in contemporary television studies. It specifically explores the way binge-watching has been covered in the technological histories of television, fan studies, audience reception research, and narratology. In this, it insists that binge-watching is deployed in different ways within the broad and diverse field of television studies. The distinct uses of binge-watching in different sub-fields of television studies makes it a term that can be deployed in a variety of ways, suggesting that there can be no ‘one’ definition, also allowing for its resilience in the face of constant change of the medium.

Keywords

Binge-watching, fan studies and audience reception research, narratology, technologies histories of TV

The current state of binge-watching research is broad, varied and brings together many different areas of the field of television studies. It even serves to position the field more centrally in debates surrounding contemporary digital cultures and societies. To start, it is perhaps necessary to understand the permeability of the term. It is used by various branches of television studies, often for distinct purposes and in ways that need to be defined clearly in each of these individual analyses. The purpose of this article is to give an overview of the various ways in which the term and concept of binge-watching is mobilised, with the aim of offering a broader understanding of the terminology and its usage in television studies. Thus, its purpose is not to give a definitive definition of the term. In fact, I argue in this overview that the term binge-watching and its lack of specificity serves to underline the various ways contemporary television is studied within television studies.

Different branches of television studies tackle the issue of binge-watching in distinct ways, as outlined below. One commonality is the recognition that binge-watching

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features prominently in the current television landscape and the role streaming platforms play in establishing this linkage. What emerges as some elements that define binge-watching are as follows

1. The self-determined viewing of a television text. Meaning, no matter how much time a viewer may actually spend viewing individual episodes or how many episodes of a serialised TV programme are watched, the viewer retains control over what is watched and when. This differs significantly from viewing prescribed by television schedules.
2. Interruptions to viewing are more likely to be due to everyday life, rather than through commercial breaks or other elements that might 'pollute' the text (Jacobs, 2011). The term is usually only applied to serialised television.
3. This implies watching on a platform other than linear broadcast television.

This hardly encompasses the complexity of these debates, especially as television culture remains changeable and meanings in flux. Yet, these three elements serve to describe a 'lowest common denominator' at this moment in the history of television. To do justice to the complexity it is important to consider the varying research perspectives provided in the field by research into technological histories, fan studies research, audience research, and research into the textual structures of contemporary television.

The technologies of binge-watching

What looms large in the discussions about binge-watching and contemporary television are questions about the technologies of the viewing practice. As the technologies of television proliferate it is useful to look to the past of the technologies of binge-watching. If binge-watching is not only the viewing of more than one episode in one sitting, but also about viewers executing autonomy over the schedule, it is technology which enables this to happen (Jenner, 2018, 2019). An important part of that history are practices of time-shifting and the re-visiting of content, more than the kind of binge-watching on first run platforms like Netflix encourage. It was DVD culture that first made binge-watching a more visible phenomenon, suggesting how closely linked it is with technologies that subvert the linear television schedule and allow viewers to self-schedule and re-visit content at their own time.

When it comes to re-visiting content however, the first versions of this were entirely industry sanctioned. Derek Kompare (2005), focusing on re-runs on US television, points out that re-runs on 1950s TV often generated the same, even higher ratings than on initial transmission. This went against industry expectations: using re-runs largely to fill the schedules, the idea was that re-runs would attract 'new audiences' who missed the first airing of an episode. What they found instead was that ratings remained the same and, in some cases, were higher than upon first broadcast, indicating that viewers were re-watching episodes (Kompare, 2005: 52). These indications of audience desires could be more easily accommodated in the United States, where viewers had access to three national and, depending on where you lived, several local channels. In the United

Kingdom and other European Public Service Broadcasting systems, only one channel was available and second or third channels only added slowly throughout the 1950s and 1960s (see for example, Burns, 2004). This left little room in the schedules for re-runs. Yet, Matt Hills' and Joanne Garde-Hansen's research (2017) finds that audio recordings of *Doctor Who* (1963–1989) episodes were made when that technology became widely available in the 1970s, making it possible to re-visit episodes (at least in some fashion). This indicates that audience (or fan) desires for re-runs still existed. The desire for recording technologies amongst some fans points to how crucial the VCR was in allowing viewers to re-visit content. Importantly however, the VCR was also a time-shifting technology, allowing viewers for the first time to record content while watching something else or, simply, go out and catch up later on missed episodes of a TV series (see for example Gray, 1992). Thus, the VCR introduced an unprecedented level of viewer control to television culture. This self-determination would go on to develop in different ways into the level of control over schedule and content binge-watching suggests. Kim Bjarkman (2004) describes collectors of VHS tapes looking for recorded TV episodes. This kind of engagement appears to be about the TV series as much as the medium and nostalgia for TV and the 'flow' in past eras of television. This trifecta of engagement suggests that this practice exceeds a close viewer-text relationship to include delivery systems (in more than one way). However, the media nostalgia for VHS tapes stands out: in relation to DVD box sets, theorists like Kompare (2005) and Hills (2007) have pointed to the importance of the object that can be held and placed on a shelf. DVDs also mean better image and sound quality and allow for the inclusion of different language soundtracks and take up less space than VHS tapes (Kompare, 2005: 200). Thus, in many ways, the DVD may very well be a superior product, indicating that the extensive search to collect TV episodes on VHS Bjarkman discusses is not primarily about the text and the viewer-text relationship, but the medium.

The next stage of re-visiting and controlling content is also the era of television where binge-watching becomes increasingly common, though it remains marginalised. The TVIII era starts in the late 1990s and is often linked with HBO's approach to 'quality' television at that time. In the United States, the two main functions of the VCR, allowing for the re-visiting and time-shifting of broadcast television, was quickly taken up by two new technologies: the DVR and the DVD player, though it would take longer for the DVR to penetrate markets outside the United States than the DVD (see Turner, 2011). The DVR would make time-shifting much easier, allowing audiences to not just zip through the advertisements but skipping them altogether. Meanwhile, DVD box sets became central technologies for re-visiting TV series, both old and new (see Hills, 2007).

It is part of Netflix company lore that it developed its insistence on binge-watching through publication methods and an interface based on data collected from the way US consumers rented and returned discs from DVD box sets (see, for example, Jurgensen, 2013). It is difficult to assess the truth of the matter or whether Netflix' observation was really that unique. After all, the major studios would have had a much better sense of sales figures of DVD box sets. Still, they would not necessarily have had a sense of *how* audiences watched DVD box sets in the same way as DVD-rental services like Netflix. In fact, many DVD box sets from the early 2000s, from *CSI* (2000–2015) to

Six Feet Under (2001–2005), have elaborately designed menus and do not feature a ‘play all’ function, indicating that distributors assumed menu design would be more, or at least equally, important to viewers than the experience of what Jason Jacobs terms a ‘pure text’ (2011). Jacobs argues that interruptions, such as advertising, idents, teasers, etc. would be experienced as ‘pollution’ rather than part of the text. Meanwhile, DVD box sets, DVRs that allow for skipping adverts, or later streaming on platforms like Netflix have removed many aspects (though not all) that ‘pollute’ the text from DVD menus and trailers to the interruption necessary when changing DVDs. The ‘pure’ text is highly relevant in considering concepts of defining binge-watching and how the different technologies enable this kind of TV viewing. Though narrative complexity was a property of much US TV before then (as discussed below), the increased appearance of HBO-style ‘quality’ TV coincided with the rise of the DVD box set. This suggests, as Michael Newman and Elena Levine (2012: 135–136) argue, that perhaps more than a coincidence is at stake. As Catherine Johnson (2012: 37–60) argues, HBO used its programmes to market itself from the late 1990s onwards and the delivery system of the DVD box set, in many respects, optimised that effort. Many of HBO’s complex narratives benefit from re-watching to follow plot details while the visual aesthetics reward focused binge-watching through the visual pleasures. As such, narrative complexity, which is discussed below, needs to be understood as part of technological discourses, just as much as it is a textual property.

Technological histories of binge-watching however, can serve to make messy histories of technological ‘progress’ seem relatively smooth in hindsight. The debates surrounding technological development are much more complex and ideas of ‘progress’ usually serve more as ideological constructs than a linear progression of technology (Dawson, 2008: 19–20). Binge-watching and how it is enabled by Netflix is often framed as ‘give the people what they want’, as Kevin Spacey, one of Netflix’ mouthpieces, put it in an interview with David Letterman on 1 February 2013 to promote the first season of *House of Cards* (2013–2018). Yet, the popularity of binge-watching may be more the result of a concerted marketing effort or the result of specific textual structures than a ‘natural’ way to watch serialised programming or ‘natural’ progression of television technologies (see Jenner, 2018: 161–182). Further, from a global perspective, the vast difference in media policies and political histories that can promote or limit the reach of technologies (such as the Cold War) significantly complicate these narratives. This indicates the complex debates surrounding media technologies. The insistence on binge-watching’s importance to Netflix as a closer reading of audience behaviour also serves to re-frame the company’s collection and use of viewer data as technological achievement.

Most pre-digital ancillary technologies to television do not track user behaviour, though several commercial and academic studies have provided more insight. This changes with digital technologies like DVRs and online TV. As Bret Maxwell Dawson points out in his 2008 PhD thesis, *TV Repair*

An additional feature of DVRs is that they may be connected via telephone lines to central computer databases, facilitating exchanges of information between television viewers,

broadcasters, and sponsors. Connecting DVRs to these databases makes it possible for viewers to search television listings for their favorite programs, performers, or genres, much in the same way they do the Internet, and to receive programming suggestions based on the recommendations of collaborative filtering algorithms that cross-reference their viewing histories against those of millions of other DVR owners. (2008, 193–194)

Online television makes this process even easier and the personalisation of algorithms, such as those used by Netflix (see Arnold, 2016; Finn, 2017), illustrates how central this tracking of user data has become to the medium of television. The way audiences and their behaviour are tracked to shape industry responses and contemporary television texts is one of the ways in which research into binge-watching has been framed. Another perspective on algorithmic culture is the analysis of interfaces, as Johnson argues, ‘The layout of an online TV interface and the menus, tabs and buttons that help users navigate within that service offer and encourage certain behavioural choices (to watch, search, browse and so on)’ (2019: 111). Taking this further she suggests, ‘Analysing the design of interfaces can reveal how the industry constructs online TV services as sites of action and the kinds of audience behaviours that it wants to encourage and discourage’ (2019: 113). I have argued elsewhere that Netflix, in particular, encourages binge-watching through publication models and interface design (post-play, skip intro) (2018, 119–137). As much as Netflix aims to communicate how much it is following viewer desires by enabling binge-watching, as mentioned above, the fact remains that it has successfully focused on one grouping of data points over others, possibly even some viewers over others. This suggests its interface is not a ‘natural’ consequence of viewer desires, but a manifestation of savvy use of marketing language and structuring of content. It may not, therefore, be too surprising to learn that Netflix and its texts dominate debates surrounding binge-watching. And yet, its insistence that the company was only motivated by ‘what the audience want’ ignores much of the practices of the television industry in the era of (American) HBO-style ‘quality’ TV from the late 1990s to (roughly) 2010 as well as the environment the Internet offers TV. Further, many platforms continue to include adverts, emphasising control and autonomy over the ‘pure’ text. This questioning of the role binge-watching plays in industry and academic debates on the subject is important as it provides critical perspectives on the role of television cultures within broader social discourses.

Binge-watching as fan practice

Fan studies describes a specific way of binge-watching that theorises a close viewer-text relationship which involves attentive viewing. This interpretation of binge-watching has long dominated academic and popular debates of the topic and in so many ways still does. As Hills argues in relation to DVD culture, the medium valorises individual texts by removing what Kompare calls ‘noise’ (2005)) and Jacobs ‘pollution’ (2011), such as adverts, idents or trailers. Further, Hills claims

... DVD/digital culture [...] involves texts being repeatable on demand, such that details can be perceived, and text-based arguments or interpretations can be checked and re-checked for their intersubjective plausibility. (2007: 47–48)

The properties of the DVD box set, including possibilities for binge-watching, are thus framed through the close audience–text relationship of fans. Rhiannon Bury studies fan behaviour within the current online culture and describes a range of behaviours from using DVRs to DVD box sets to illegal downloads, often as a way to bridge gaps between original broadcasts and the airing of programmes in the countries where viewers live (2017, 80–89). The use of technologies that facilitate viewing outside of the ‘official’ structures of the schedule, therefore, are analysed through the spectre of fandom.

The focus on the uses of DVD box sets and viewing practices of the highly engaged audience of fans suggests different things about binge-watching: First of all, it is telling that the term binge-watching is appropriated by Netflix and moved into the ‘mainstream’ of television culture (see Jenner, 2017) at the historical moment when fan cultures generally become increasingly accepted and desired (Jenkins et al., 2013). Thus, general audiences may very well display fan-like behaviours. Hills (2007) uses Mirko Tobias Schäfer’s (2011) helpful distinction into implicit and explicit participation, arguing that some online behaviours reveal different degrees of engagement in fan behaviour. Until recently, the relative difficulty and financial expense of binge-watching would qualify it as explicit (fan) participation. Yet, the interfaces of streaming platforms serve to make binge-watching easy, in some cases even desired (see Jenner, 2018: 119–137; Johnson, 2019: 106–130), positioning it as implicit (online) participation. Secondly, binge-watching’s roots in fan studies also help explain how binge-watching is often theorised as a viewing practice that involves a particularly close viewer–text relationship. Attentive viewing may generate a range of rewards, particularly in aesthetically and narratively complex series where information is rarely repeated (see Perks, 2015: xi). What Kompare (2005) calls acquisitive repetition also points to a relatively simple cost–benefit equation: audiences who invest (often significant amounts of) money in DVD box sets may be more likely to seek ‘value’ through attentive viewing or re-viewing. Netflix poses a problem in this regard: its much lower price point for monthly subscriptions offers binge-watching in which the cost–benefit equation of acquisitive repetition is no longer a given. As I argued in 2017, the move of binge-watching into the mainstream of television culture also means that it has become a way of ‘watching TV’, an activity that may not be passive, but is also far from the attentive viewing and re-viewing associated with fandom. Television audience research increasingly aims to conceptualise this spectrum. Graeme Turner, for example, recently argued that binge-watching may only be the contemporary terminology for ‘watching telly’ (2019b).

Binge-watching as audience practice

Lisa Glebatis Perks, with *Media Marathoning* in 2015, has given us perhaps the earliest comprehensive study of media marathoning, as she terms it. Though the majority of her study subjects could be termed fans, they are framed as ‘media marathoners’ rather than fans. In other words, it is less the audience–text relationship, paratextual relationships, or the participation in a fan community that is highlighted, but the viewing behaviour – or reading behaviour, as the study includes the reading of novel series. At the same time,

marathoning, or, to stick to the language used here, binge-watching, is still understood as ‘extraordinary’ media behaviour rather than the ‘ordinary’ practice of watching TV.

Conceptualising binge-watching through fan behaviours is helpful as long as it remains a relatively marginalised practice. Yet, as online culture has made access to streaming platforms and associated practices of binge-watching easier and more affordable, it is useful to explore the practice as a general audience one. In the edited collection *Connected Viewing* (2014), Chuck Tryon and Max Dawson studied college students and their use of digital technologies, observing that some of their subjects binge-watch while doing chores like cleaning. In other words, they are ‘distracted’ viewers:

... students at NU [Northwestern University] reported using Netflix as a kind of electronic companion or video wallpaper, much in the way that [broadcast] television is used. As a 21-year-old female NU student explained, she and her two roommates in an off-campus apartment ‘have on Netflix, almost just as background noise. Like you would just a TV show.’ Along with her roommates (and many of her NU classmates), these young women frequently use Netflix as a form of ‘ambient television,’ despite the fact that they also subscribe to a basic cable package. (2014, Kindle location 6386)

With this study, Dawson and Tryon develop an early understanding of viewers’ ‘distracted’ or ‘casual’ binge-watching and link this behaviour back to practices common for television viewing. In 2018, Kun Xu and Emil Steiner published a study into the uses and gratifications of binge-watching for US binge-watchers. They found a spectrum of the attention viewers pay to different texts or different parts of a text. The idea that attention viewers pay varies moves binge-watching away from the close viewer-text relationship suggested by earlier work and more towards television audiences. Merikivi et al. (2018) also find different levels of engagement and correlate them with satisfaction levels of users. As television culture shifts and changes, so do the ways viewers binge-watch and relate to the various delivery systems of TV – such as VHS tapes, DVD box sets, ‘saved up’ episodes on a DVR, SVOD platforms, or whatever comes next.

Another important aspect of conceptualising binge-watching as audience practice is its position within a broader online culture. Tanya Horeck (2019) usefully conceptualises how the ‘true crime’ genre is carried across different online platforms. She specifically questions how issues of gender, race and class are condensed in the format of ‘bingeable’ true crime documentaries like the 2015 hit, *Making a Murderer* (2015–). This perspective is important, as it theorises spectatorship and ‘bingeability’ within the broader dynamics of online cultures. Rather than conceptualising cultures of viewing individually, Horeck’s approach considers how binge-watching functions across a range of digital media, including the culture of sharing memes or video clips on social media. Caroline Bainbridge (2019) further conceptualises binge-watching as part of the affective imperatives of digital culture. She uses psychoanalysis to de-construct how binge-watching becomes symptomatic of wider (neoliberal) digital cultures and, importantly, construction of the self within that context. The broader culture of online media is important to research into binge-watching in other respects. Graeme Turner (2019a) points to this issue when he speaks of different ‘cultures of use’ mobilised in the variety of technologies that are often used alongside television viewing. Johnson highlights the

way online TV interfaces need to compete with other websites (2019: 106–130), while Roman Lobato (2019) discusses the broader online ecology in which streaming platforms (in this case, Netflix) operate and compete as a transnational broadcaster. I have previously theorised Netflix' binge model and its role in the publication of content throughout its different markets at the same time in relation to social media (2018: 221–225). Social media have enabled viewers around the world to communicate about television at the point of original broadcast. Yet, this access to information about a text without necessarily being able to access the text itself has introduced a range of issues that are crucial to the contemporary television environment and the viewing practices that develop. The time lag of transnational television flows still means that viewers may need to wait one or more years until they can watch new episodes of a TV programme. In her study of fans within the new digital environment, Rhiannon Bury notes, 'the participants who viewed pirated content did so primarily because of their affective relationship to the text and a lack of timely access via broadcast television' (2017: 82). In relation to binge-watching, these broader contexts of online culture determine different aspects of contemporary television, including the means by which viewers can access texts legally or illegally (see Elkins, 2019; Lobato, 2019: Kindle location 2240–2497). There is thus a notable tendency to understand the viewing cultures as part of broader online ecologies, positioning binge-watching not as isolated practice, but part of broader television and increasingly online cultures.

These different approaches to reconsidering what binge-watching is and how it interlinks with individual platforms will determine the future of audience research into binge-watching. Yet, what they indicate is how crucial understanding binge-watching already is for wider television cultures.

Bingeable texts

Next to different approaches in audience studies, it is perhaps narrative theory that is the most common approach to understanding binge-watching: the question what sets a story told in weekly instalments apart from one designed to be consumed in rapid succession. As in many debates surrounding binge-watching, Netflix dominates the discussion. This is not simply because of Netflix' current market dominance and how its transnational scope makes it an important part of the contemporary TV landscape. Netflix' 'binge model' of publishing an entire season at the same time and its interface structure makes its original productions an important case study into the way texts are specifically designed *for* binge-watching. There are different elements to this idea. First, there is a question of whether the narrative structures of texts written for binge-watching are really that different from previous TV dramas. Arguably, television narratives have grown increasingly complex over the course of television history, but is television specifically designed for binge-watching really more complex than what came before?

In the 1990s, Robin Nelson, discussing British and American television, gives an account of what he terms flexi-narrative.

[The flexi-narrative series] has achieved a narrative structure which combines the allegedly 'masculine' preference for action and narrative resolution with the supposedly 'feminine' fluidity and open-endedness in story-telling with emphasis on human interest. By combining a number of stories in one episode, it is indeed possible to appeal to a range of audience segments. (1997: 33).

The entrance of the soap narrative structure into other genres is a significant step in the development of television narrative. The soap structure allows for the narrative climax to be postponed for several episodes. Thus, each storyline has a drive towards resolution, but not all storylines are resolved at the same time. In his popular book *Everything Bad is Good For You*, Steven Johnson offers an analysis of *The Sopranos* (1999–2005), in which he argued that this series, lauded for its narrative complexity, follows the same structures as soaps, essentially pointing towards flexi-narrative (2006, 65–72). David Lavery (2010) makes a similar point about *Dexter* (2006–2013), highlighting that its narrative structure is best described in Nelson's terms as flexi-narrative. Jason Mittell (2015) uses the terminology of complexity to describe a shift in the modes of televisual storytelling, describing complexity as almost 'the norm' for American television (though in some genres more than others). This remains, at least partially, true for streaming platforms. Yet, Mittell remains deliberately vague in his understanding of complexity. Kathrin Rothemund, in her German-language exploration of narrative structures offers a definition of complexity in American television of the early 2000s that allows for an analysis of how far television narratives have progressed: a large number of storylines, variety in these storylines (both can be summarised under the term diversity), an emerging sense of connection between the different storylines (to a narrative 'whole'), non-linearity, openness (polysemic meanings) and contingency (Rothemund, 2013, 55–78). Of course, none of these elements can be treated as unchangeable, particularly as technological and industry conditions are constantly in flux. Yet, this understanding allows for a judgement of what elements of complexity develop in which direction and how much of this is motivated by plot. As the medium changes, its narratives, and what can be understood as complex, develops in different directions. Narrative complexity determines an idea of 'bingeability', the idea that a text gains from being watched in quick succession, partly so that audiences can 'keep track' of series memory. Trisha Dunleavy (2017) extends the concept of narrative complexity by focusing on multiplatform television. Other scholars, such as Djoymi Baker (2017), suggest that the narrative structures of 'bingeable' television are more akin to an epic, designed to be consumed as one long narrative, rather than episodically. Casey McCormick (2016) similarly focusses on binge-watching as immersive narrative.

As more streaming platforms with different distribution models enter the market and the transnational nature of streaming, online culture, and viewing cultures are explored further, more questions arise. As Netflix expands into different genres in its self-produced originals, it becomes obvious that 'bingeability' means different things for genres like reality TV than it does for drama. Another issue arises in relation to opening credits and their function within streaming interfaces that are designed to encourage binge-watching (Jenner, 2018, 153–157).

Conclusion

This article has offered a brief overview of the various branches of research into binge-watching. Yet, considering how central binge-watching is to contemporary television cultures, there are more questions to be asked, often linked to broader television culture. As argued above, the research of scholars like Horeck (2019) also points to the importance of research on binge-watching to the research of wider online economies, which positions television studies at the centre of wider cultural debates.

A further aspect of binge-watching research emerges from some of the questions raised about narrative complexity and binge-watching's linkages with the emergence of HBO-style 'quality' TV and DVD box sets. As Newman and Levine argue, television scholarship plays a significant part in an overall 'legitimation' of television in the 2000s and 2010s. This process of legitimation elevates the HBO-style 'quality' television of the era to the status of 'high culture'. Though there remains other (and 'othered') television, the discourses of narrative complexity, DVD box sets, binge-watching, and cultural legitimation remain closely linked (see Jenner, 2019). Ri Pierce-Grove explores the use of the term 'binge-watching' in journalism, arguing that 'binge watching's coverage charts the shifts in the discourse over time as journalists react to a 'new' medium (streaming video) and its multiple associated consumer practices' (2017). This careful analysis of when and how discourses surrounding television shift in different cultural arenas, and different cultures, deserves to be considered in more depth. The close, fan-like audience-text relationship initially theorised for binge-watching is linked to the close attention complex narratives solicit, a factor Dennis Broe (2019) theorises as a part of the functioning of hyperindustrialised societies. Yet, does this shift as binge-watching is becoming a more 'normalised' part of television culture and new streaming platforms revert to the publication of weekly episodes?

Another approach of binge-watching is industry studies. Conceptual approaches like Johnson's analysis of interfaces and my own research into Netflix' use of binge-watching can encapsulate the way industry uses the viewing practice. Amanda Lotz' research into curating processes of online television in *Portals* (2017) deals less with binge-watching but outlines how the US television industry approaches TV as an online medium. The way this influences transnational television industries and television cultures also figure prominently in any discussion of Netflix (see Lobato, 2019).

As the wide range of research approaches and the history of binge-watching indicates, the terminology is widely applicable and permeable enough to describe several different things. The 'lowest common denominator' definition I give in the introduction does not even begin to grasp the wide-ranging histories and practices encompassed by the term, or its uses within television research. The broad concepts and ideas the term evokes show how intrinsic it is to studying contemporary television. Viewing practices are interlinked with a range of aspects of contemporary television, meaning that researching contemporary television often means developing an understanding of binge-watching. What remains, perhaps, the most salient point, is that binge-watching is a term with a broad variety of understandings and definitions that is central to contemporary television culture in all its complexity and diversity.


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