

Evolving Trends in Television Consumption

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Abstract

Television is an extremely popular platform for entertainment. Since its creation in the early 1920's it had become increasingly more popular. Given this popularity there has been not only an increase in consumption but also an increase in the technologies used. This paper will attempt to answer the question; how has television consumption changed and, what are the main mechanisms behind this? Firstly, the origins of television will be discussed focusing on the early and differing production methods adopted in both the UK and the USA. Early views and consumption habits will be analysed in order to grasp early opinions on this medium of entertainment. Then existing technologies that have had a significant impact will be evaluated including the VHS, DVD and the recent innovation of Online streaming. In order to effectively analyse this a more detailed look into Netflix and its original content will then be discussed to show how this platform is changing consumption and television itself. Finally the role of the internet will be discussed focusing on the theory of social TV, the spoiler effect and the role of online communities with regards to television consumption. Finally the conclusion aims to examine all these ideas together to identify the key changes we have noticed in contemporary television consumption in light of these recent technological advancements. From the research conducted into this area is it clear the television consumption is a robust and growing area of entertainment and research into this area is vital and worthwhile.

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Introduction

Television is a long established and popular medium for entertainment. It does not require any intellectual or physical ability. It is a universal pastime. Given its popularity, consumption levels have increased and the modes of consumption and technologies have improved and diversified. This paper will focus on emerging trends in television consumption and television viewing technologies. This paper will attempt to answer the question; how has television consumption changed and, what are the main mechanisms behind this?

In order to effectively analyse this, chapter 1 will focus on the history of television consumption and identify trends noticed in line with previous technological advancements. Beginning with the invention of the television, its origins and first uses will be identified. The first instances of television were all broadcast live and the technology to record was not invented yet so it is difficult to analyse early television. Analysing television production, we will look at the differences in UK and USA production as two international leaders in television. When production began in the UK it was seen as a commodity and was set up as a public service – to enrich the lives of the British people. Contrary to this, American television was set up for commerce, to generate profit and provide advertising. Both approaches to television production will be analysed here along with their influence on current and emerging television practices.

In chapter 2, the impact of technological advancements on television consumption and popular culture will be discussed. Evolving from the VHS and DVD in the early 1980s to now with the introduction of Video on demand services. The resistance from big production studios to the early innovations will be looked at and its significance to the process as a whole. The 1976

lawsuit between Sony and Universal City Studios discussed in King (2014) is a significant event in this area and the outcome, analysed in this chapter, is a noteworthy moment in television history. Moving on to look more specifically at video on demand services and internet television consumption, some of these services will be looked at in detail including Netflix, Hulu and Amazon. Traditional networks have created their own online streaming services in order to combat the big online libraries that viewers are now becoming more accustomed to. The increase in this technology has brought about certain cultural phenomena and one in particular noted in Matrix (2014) is binge-watching which has become a new cultural norm aided greatly by the introduction of Netflix.

Chapter 3, will then look at the emergence of online television looking specifically at Netflix Original Content. The impact of DVD box sets on consumption is an important historical development which has created the way for the emergence of online streaming and online content. Netflix as a company ran into financial trouble in 2011 as noted in Allen et al (2014) but the introduction of its original content has found a whole new market for the platform. The specific ways in which Netflix was able to so successfully create this new market will be explored here, notably their decision to give control over to the creators and the significant decision not to have any pilots. Netflix do not release any viewership data, this fact is significant in its own right as popularity and performance must be signalled by media coverage and word of mouth. As this content is created and hosted in untraditional ways it has unsurprisingly become more diverse and spans a huge range of topics and genres. Finally this chapter will look at the specific changes seen in television narratives from the introduction of video on demand content. Factors such as heavily serialised storytelling, shorter seasons and the absence of advertising have all been impactful.

The fourth and final chapter will focus on the internet as an influence over television consumption and culture. Firstly I will be examining the new area of Social TV and the importance of studying social media to identify trends and popularities. In their study Cesar and Geerts (2011) have identified the reasons why Social TV has emerged including selection and sharing purposes, direct communication, community building and status updates. The theory of time-shifting will be discussed again with regard to a new area it relates to – communication. The increase in technologies and platforms have allowed viewers to continue their conversations after television broadcast and in line with how television is now consumed, when the viewer decides. Hess et al conducted a study in 2011 that identified the reasons why viewers are now utilising the internet in conjunction with their television consumption. They have identified four main areas namely social networking, additional information, recommendation and personalisation. This chapter aims to explore the reasoning behind this and the notion of device switching and the impact this has had on communication in recent years. A final significant area discussed is the trend of online communities that has had both an impact on communication and consumption of television.

Finally the conclusion aims to examine all these ideas together to identify the key changes we have noticed in contemporary television consumption in light of these recent technological advancements. From the research conducted into this area is it clear the television consumption is a robust and growing area of entertainment and research into this area is vital and worthwhile.

Chapter 1

The History of Television and the Historical Influences on Traditional Methods of Television Production

The medium of Television first became available in the 1920s and has since grown into one of the most popular platforms for entertainment consumption. It was a profound new medium of communication and a source of both entertainment and information. The technology created was revolutionary and ultimately proved to be exceptionally popular with the mass public. This chapter will focus on the origins of television, how the technology behind it was created and who it was created by. This paper will focus on television created in the Western world (primarily UK and USA). Further, the structures that were in place in both the UK and USA and how they influenced each other will be discussed. Finally, early television viewing patterns and opinions will be analysed in order to quantify the evolution of television consumption that will be discussed in later chapters.

Television is defined as a system for converting visual images with sound into electrical signals, transmitting them by radio or other means, and displaying them electronically on a screen (Merriam-Webster, 2015). The birth of television could be argued as early as 1839, when Alexandre Edmond Becquerel observed the electrochemical effect of light. The next stage occurred with the development of photo electricity in 1873 (Garrat and Mumford, 1952). The British Broadcasting Company (BBC) then argue strongly that television was first created by John Logie Baird using a washstand, a projection lamp and discs cut from cycle lenses (BBC, 2001). While the initial invention of the television is widely debated, it was Baird who made the first broadcast. Andrew Crisell (2002) asserts that while there are many significant

figures who contributed to television's invention, it was untimely the investment and research of major communication companies such as Marconi and RCA that created the first working television for mass consumption. However, Baird is responsible for some of the major leaps forward in TV technology "He began demonstrations of his systems at Selfridge's in 1925, televised moving images in the following year, and in 1928 sent the first intelligible TV signal across the Atlantic and began regular experimental transmissions in London." (Crisell, 2002, p77).

When television first began it was broadcast live, as the technology to record had yet to be invented. Television was created to be radio with moving pictures and began as just that. The first obstacle in producing television pre-recorded was creating the technology for cameras that could record moving image and transmitters that could send out the signal needed to be invented. The discovery of the element selenium became one of the biggest discoveries for television. "The discovery of the chemical element selenium enabled this vision of television to seem closer, since a bank of selenium sensors in an electronic camera would turn the different amounts of light falling on them into different strengths of electrical current." (Bignell, 2008, p44). The technology to record it for academic purposes or otherwise did not become available until the 1950s. Inexpensive recording methods, namely video cassettes only became available to the general public in the 1980s, thus prior to this, any footage available would have had to be obtained from the television broadcasting institutions themselves. Recording television at the time was primarily for training purposes to produce similar content as opposed to historical preservation. The unfortunate consequence of not having proper records of early television is ineffective analysis. Television programmes from that period can often be displayed in a comedic fashion. Since the records are so poor it is possible that they are shown in that way because of the way they were recorded. "Until very recently, television

from the past was something to make fun of rather than to appreciate in its own terms.” (Bignell, 2008, p41). Because of this viewpoint it is difficult to judge works completed in the 1920s to 1960s in their own right as the records are not there to be able to do so effectively.

In order to analyse early television it is important to remember the differing cultures and economies at the time. Given the magnitude of television production today and the technology required to provide it, it was inevitable that different cultures would view this in differing ways. Different countries created their own models on which to create and broadcast content with different degrees of success. These methods while initially separate in their thinking, have in recent years merged but it is still very important to analyse early television views and opinions. Standards were created and television untimely followed patterns and predetermined visual representations of lifestyles. Television is a large and influential industry. It was of course natural that empowered bodies, such as a government or large corporation were required to determine how and what was made. This paper will now look at some of these models, specifically early television production in the UK and USA.

When broadcasting television became a viable commodity different countries saw this opportunity in different ways. In the UK it was seen similarly to other commodities such as water or electricity. Due to Victorian influences on how the economy of commodities were structured it was to be controlled by the government and a sanctioned government body was to control its use. They would have say over what content was produced, what narratives were allowed and what was to be determined as appropriate for the audiences. “The thinking behind the organisation of the BBC as a semi-autonomous public corporation was inherited from the late Victorian corporations which has monopolies to provide services such as gas, electricity and water.” (Bignell, 2008, p46). The BBC had this control in Britain, given to them directly

by the government. They received and still receive funding from the payment of a national television licence, meaning they do not have to rely on selling advertising time or appealing to large consumer commercial businesses.

While in the USA, when television became a mainstream product, a more commercialised route was adopted. Companies would control distribution and therefore revenue streams had to be created. Ratings and viewer levels became important to not just measure popularity but also for the advertiser who would pay for advertising allowing for the production to take place in the first place. It was not seen as a universal commodity such as water but more as a luxury item. It was organised the same as their radio, not a public service but a commodity offered to the public, or those who could afford it. “American television, like radio, would use national networks supplying programmes to local stations which paid to broadcast them, gaining income from commercials and the sponsorship of programmes” (Bignell, 2008, p46). While the initial set up of these two influential models is very different, both in terms of opinions and motivation both models are still present in television production today.

The difference in the initial set up of these models can be summarised into three key reasons. 1) The established platform of Radio; 2) The America first amendment and 3) the instituted public service in the UK (Dunleavy, 2009). Television that was developed from radio in the UK was developed from Lord John Reith (BBC Director-General 1927 – 38) and his view that public service broadcasting (PBS) was “an opportunity to foster greater equality between citizens through shared experiences.” (Dunleavy, 2009, p14). As mentioned the BBC is funded by the National television licence and is therefore justly seen as a service to the general public. Content must be suitable and appropriate for its public and generated with this in mind. Content produced in the USA on the other hand was required to follow the American first amendment.

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.” (Legal Information Institute, 2016). With this in mind television content that was to be created for the mass population was required, by law, to not effect freedom of speech. Any instances of censorship would have been unlawful. The final reason, the UK public service, given the thinking behind television, the initial set up of the BBC was similar to other national commodities.

A big difference in television content between UK and USA at the time was that the content the BBC would produce was free from advertising. This meant there were no breaks in the narrative for adverts. Therefore, narratives were developed differently. BBC content did not need, or couldn't accommodate mid episode cliff hangers. Episodes were longer in length and required a different flow than if it were to be interrupted throughout. This trend will be looked in more detail in the next chapters but is very interesting with regards to the current consumption of television content on more modern technologies. Television content created in the USA was filled with breaks for advertisements that were necessary for revenue to produce them. However this did not cause consumption levels to decrease in any significant way and is still the most common format for broadcasted content.

When we analyse the two models for early television production there was a significant turning point in British broadcasting when in 1955 Independent Television (ITV) was launched. The content produced here included commercial advertisements and was influenced by the American model of television production. This introduction was not without issues though, “Many influential figures resisted ITV, including the BBC director-general John Reith, who

compared commercial television to bubonic plague, and concern was fuelled by the American commercial television coverage of the coronation in 1953, when messages from programme sponsors frequently interrupted the Westminster Abbey service” (Bignell, 2008, p53). There were many opponents to commercialised television within the UK who fought to allow the BBC to maintain a monopoly. “As a monopoly it could still apply broadcasting to the most serious purposes, cooperating with such civilizing forces as the schools and universities.” (Crisell, 2002, p85). This group also argued that without a monopoly it would be difficult to justify the payment of the National television license. Another issue was that ITV was not as established as the BBC so imported already established shows from America and this highlighted the differences in production. “When ITV began broadcasting, the pace and style of British television changed somewhat because in order to compete with the BBC the new channel showed imported American programmes and used American formats, as in the action drama series *The Adventures of Robin Hood* and *The Count of Monte Cristo*.” (Bignell, 2008, p56). The fact that this change occurred at all lays testament to the American style of production. Revenue and advertising incomes became important to television production and this in turn had an effect on narratives. This can be further seen in 1982, with the launch of Channel 4 a fourth British television channel. Influences from the USA are evident here as the revenue to support this channel came solely from advertising times on air.

Television was thought initially to be a rival to cinema because groups would gather to watch in public places such as train stations, restaurants and department stores to watch serial shows, such as soap operas. This could have been mainly due to the expense of purchasing a television set when they first became available but there was also a strong social experience to television viewing. It formed a new source of community, especially when people moved outside the crowded cities. It became a social experience, people and families would gather around the

television set in informal settings. “This was especially the case in the newly built suburbs of the major cities in which people had chosen to locate themselves after leaving the close-knit but overcrowded Victorian housing of older towns and city centres.” (Bignell, 2008, p52). This is a stark contrast to viewing habits now, as television and the methods of viewing have become more solitary. So while narratives of long continuing storylines are still commonplace, there has been a shift into more complicated narratives. This theory will be explored in more detail in further chapters.

In the early days families would gather together to enjoy the activity of television viewing. It was a pastime that could be enjoyed by a variety of people as it did not require any intellectual skill or physical ability. If we take a specific television genre, the soap opera, we can see this. Examples include *Coronation Street* (ITV) 1960- present, *Eastenders* (BBC) 1985 – present, and the American *All my Children* (ABC) 1970- 2011. The soap opera orientated in America radio in the 1930s before it became a stable television genre. These programs were (and still are) produced to be long standing continuing dramas, that can be enjoyed on a fixed broadcasting schedule. “Narratively, it is characterised by unrelenting, serialisation, the multiplicity of stories in each episode, the interlocking, interweaving structure within which these stories unfold, and a consistent evasion of narrative closure.” (Dunleavey, 2009, p21). These shows were and are still created for continued viewing. They were created with the television viewer in mind, ultimately that television would become a daily experience and you would be able to follow narratives over a long period of time. Communities could be formed over the shared viewing of these shows and there tendency towards highly dramatic scenes created a vast scope for conversation.

While the early records of television are not still adequate this is still an important area that requires more research given its significance to television consumption habits now. Television and its technology became common place in many households and was eventually no longer seen as a luxury item. The pace of production and sheer amount of content increased as the popularity of the medium increased. Television executives and broadcasting institutions knew they had to cater for a larger and more diverse audience and had to look at cheaper and quicker delivery methods. The influences from both the early UK and USA methods for production can still be seen in television production today although the modern technologies have persisted with new and innovative methods. In the financial year of 2013/14 the UK TV Licensing board (2016) issued 25,419,296 individual TV licenses meaning not only is the TV audience larger than ever but is ultimately more diverse and demanding.

Chapter 2

The Impact of Technological Advancements on Television Consumption and Popular Culture.

Technological advancements have shaped the way television is consumed. It has become more affordable, more diverse and more transferable. Moving image as a form of entertainment continues to change today. A pivotal turning point was the invention of the VHS in the 1970s as was the invention of the DVD in the early 1990s. We are now faced with another massive change to the industry by way of Video on Demand (VOD) and online streaming services such as Netflix and Hulu. This chapter will focus on the changes that have occurred in consumption and the technological innovations that caused them.

Television saw a boom period post WWII as the cinema industry saw a decline in audiences. Wasser (2001) notes that there were many boom and bust periods for the film industry during this time with all the major Hollywood studios reporting losses at some stage during the 1960s to early 1970s. Television on the other hand was becoming more popular as was mentioned in the previous chapter. As was to be expected this expansion of popularity brought an attraction of investment in technology to capitalise on the growing market.

This major improvement in technology was seen firstly with the VHS tape in 1976 and then the introduction of the DVD in 1995. When the DVD was first introduced production studios and in particular Universal were naturally resistant. Any other version of film/TV was going to be a competitor and this technology allowed the viewer to record and watch content when they wanted. This became apparent with the lawsuit between Universal City Studios (and co-plaintiff Disney Productions) and Sony Corporation of America which began in November 1976. “Universal argued that technology companies should not be permitted to facilitate the

duplication of television broadcasts” (King, 2014, p297). The case was built on the theory of time-shifting, that VHS was allowing the consumer to record and watch scheduled programming at another time, Universal did not consider the effects of video rental (which was not popular at the time.) “This is a fundamental shift in how we understand a television program, the idea that it has permanence, and that it is worthy of permanence.” (Metcalf, 2012, p5). So the obvious loss of impact on advertising is effected but also, especially in Disney’s case, the chance of future increased revenues. “Films for young children are uniquely timeless because they can be renewed every seven to ten years for a new generation of children who have not yet experienced the originals.” (Wasser, 2001, p84). The ability to own your own copy of these movies for potential future enjoyment was disastrous for Disney. According to Wasser (2001), the first judge on the case ruled against Universal, only for the decision to be appealed and made in Universals favour. Sony then went on to have the US Supreme Court reverse the ruling and uphold the original decision. The case as a whole spanned a period of eight years. The ruling was very significant as Universal did have a good claim for the case and it is now historically significant when we look at technological advancements in the industry. “The Sony win is one of the rare instances when the government or the court did not take the opportunity to extend copyright protection in the current era of new technologies.” (Wasser, 2001, p84). Almost implying that new technologies acquire a larger legal tolerance than traditional modes of innovations.

The VHS (and subsequently the DVD) was eventually integrated into television viewing culture. This mode of cultivating film and TV integrated into cultural norms and became an excepted alternative form of consumption. “The phrase “I’ll just wait for the video” is a commonsense expression of this sentiment, indicating how effectively the film industry has used the publishing model in adapting to the challenge of a new technology.”(Kompere, 2006,

p339). The same can be argued for music, as a large population of music consumers moved from vinyl to disc to mp3 to now complete online collections with providers such as Spotify or Apple Music. The consumption of these products adapted in response to the technological innovation.

As with any profitable and popular industry further innovations continued to emerge and none have been more impactful than Video on Demand and online streaming. This is the process of watching content from studios own online websites (e.g. RTE player), subscription paid services such as Netflix or Amazon prime or illegal streaming sites. The technology was developed to operate on computers, or stream through computer game consoles. King (2014) makes the point that very early in the process of VOD and online streaming, consumers were not in favour of it as they were not receiving a tangible asset (e.g. a DVD) in exchange for their money. Consumers were proud of their collections, they became connoisseurs. But just as the VHS, then the DVD were consumed within the culture, so too has VOD. The interest in VOD has occurred massively inline with the increase in interest with the internet, this will be looked at in more detail in the final chapter. “By the end of the 20th century, the pervasiveness of the Internet in the digital fin-de-siècle means that no one needs a television (the box) to watch television.” (Metcalf, 2012, p5). Television as we know is a very popular form of entertainment so it is fair to say that the improvements in technology that facilitate this will also become popular.

Illegally pirating content is a large issue for this industry in particular given the nature of television consumption – viewers will generally only watch an episode once (and then continue onto the next episode). If this content is viewed online there is no opportunity to regain revenue. “Movie content may be more prone to single-use consumption than other intellectual property

categories such as music or software.” (Smith and Telang, 2009, p322). A counter action that networks have used to combat against the availability of free content is to make and operate their own websites with additional content for the viewer. An example of this is Channel 4’s online streaming service 4od where they include extra content that would not be available elsewhere to entice the viewer to their website. This is favourable of course because they can include advertising on these online broadcasts and generate revenue. An example of this would be *Fresh Meat*, a channel 4 production, where the online site included additional scenes, deleted content and cast interviews. This content would become available after the scheduled televised broadcast (Channel 4, 2016).

In order to now effectively analyse the impact of online streaming services it would be remiss not to examine Netflix as well as its competitors. Netflix has become a subscription based online streaming service, where viewers can pay a monthly subscription fee in exchange for access to a growing, immense library of television and film. Netflix was originally created as a postal DVD service, it was not until 2007 that it began offering a video on demand service in the USA. This proved to be a very profitable endeavour. “The company recorded revenues of \$5,504.7 million during the financial year ended December 2014 (FY2014), an increase of 25.8% over FY2013.” (Marketline, 2015, p3). It is because of this success that Netflix has been able to position itself as a formidable rival to traditional television and film studios. Netflix operates on the internet, it is not tied to a broadcasting schedule, does not use advertisers and it is not at the mercy of big studio rules and regulations. “By turning the familiar chain of first, second and third market distribution on its head, Netflix offers a distinctively different form of media distribution” (Jenner, 2016, p261). Since its introduction Netflix has always released its television content with full seasons at once. If we look at an example of this impact, when *Arrested Development* (Season 4) was released approximately 10% of viewers watched all 15

episodes within the first 24 hours (Wallenstein, 2013). This figure would presumably increase exponentially over the next 36 to 48 hours. “When all episodes of a season were released simultaneously, these shows inspired widespread marathon-viewing sessions for the eighteen-to –thirty-four age demographic and among the younger audiences of Netflix, many of whom binge watched and then took to social media to post their (largely positive) reviews of the first steps Netflix had taken to produce original TV content.” (Matrix, 2014, p119). This is interesting in several ways, firstly, *Arrested Development* was a notable failure on traditional viewing platforms, the program was cancelled after just 3 seasons in 2006 reportedly due to poor ratings (Goodman, 2006). However the presumed success of the program on Netflix does elude to it having a somewhat cult following. Jenner (2016) noted in detail the differences in the Netflix version, now the style associated with most Netflix original content, most notably that all episodes were released at the same time and the narrative takes on a new form. “Netflix seems to also ‘teach’ its audiences how to watch Netflix.” (Jenner, 2016, p264). Netflix is aware that its viewers will watch multiple episodes in one viewing, or it would like its viewers to do, so it is clear from the narrative choices that this is in mind. Watching multiple episodes in one viewing is a good measure of popularity for not only a particular show but also the viewers interest in the service. A viewers willingness to spend several hours on Netflix is a good sign that they are engaged with the platform. This will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

Given the mass appeal and popularity of online streaming there are a number of competitors to Netflix. Direct competitors would be Hulu and Amazon Prime (among others) but they have all created unique aspects to their services. Hulu, unlike Netflix is an ad supported platform, most of their content will contain advertisements. They have also chosen to focus primarily on television securing the after broadcast rights of popular shows such as *The 100*, *Family Guy*

and *South Park* (Lacoma, 2016). Currently users can avail of a free online version of Hulu but this contains a much smaller library of content. Alternatively users can pay a monthly subscription fee to avail of more content or a larger monthly subscription fee to avail of ad-free content. This is an interesting choice for Hulu as they are generating two revenue streams through advertisements and user subscription. Similarly, and perhaps in direct response to Netflix, Hulu has begun to produce their own original content and additionally are producing a continuation of an established series, *The Mindy Project* season 4, after its cancellation from the network Fox. This is again similar to Netflix with *Arrested Development*. Amazon Prime is the online streaming service from well established online retailing service Amazon. “Amazon Prime definitely has a lot of content, and lots of it quality content, but the tricky thing about the service is pricing. Whereas Netflix or Hulu cost about as much as a sandwich, once per month, Amazon Prime’s video service come packaged with an Amazon Prime subscription.” (Becker, 2016). Unlike Netflix and Hulu, users can choose to pay a yearly subscription fee to avail of the service. Given Amazon’s strong industry presence they have bundled their online streaming service together with other desirable services such as music, eBooks and free delivery options (Honorof, 2016). This was a strong move as these services together are a strong incentive for consumers and gives an edge over competitors.

Another fascinating phenomena that has appeared in part due to VOD, is the practice of binge-watching. This is the activity of viewing three or more episodes of the same program in one sitting. This would no longer be considered an unusual activity and could almost be expected with regards to Netflix original content (as all episodes are released at once). “The question is not *if* you’ve seen *Making a Murderer* yet. It’s how long did it take you to watch it? A week? That’s insane. Three days? That’s more like it. One day? There you go.” (Tassi, 2016). Matrix (2014) also comments on a factor of the binge watch, the “cultural unification effects or “water

cooler talk” (Matrix, 2014, p120). As stated in the previous chapter television has always been considered a social activity and a topic of conversation between peers. So due to this and the fact that Netflix releases all episodes at once, people find themselves coerced into binge watching in order to not miss out. The fear of spoilers (information about a show that was previously unknown to you) has also lead people to consume as many episodes as quickly as possible as this *must see TV* is universally praised or becomes a topic of discussion. If we look at this from a historical viewpoint, comparing 1950s TV consumption to present day, the social discussion remains but previously the consumption was done in groups whereas now it is done autonomously. VOD and social media have led to a new avenue for co-viewing, as being in the same room is no longer a necessary component. “Twitter makes co-viewing (traditionally defined as individuals in the same household watching television together) possible across geographic distance for fans of the same content.” (Pittman and Tefertiller, 2015). The need to discuss (particularly on social media) is so prevalent that people are consuming in a whole new form. “They continue to benefit from opportunities for social belonging and mediated connectedness when they watch TV contemporaneously, often by bingeing, insofar as it affords them an opportunity to be part of the pop culture conversational flow, as it happens or soon after.” (Matrix, 2014, p128). The immediacy of social media and advanced mobile technology has pushed this aspect of culture forward as well. If you are able to communicate constantly and immediately there is also a desire to consume constantly and immediately.

It could be argued that VOD is allowing the consumer to have more control over their content. As before, TV consumption was scheduled and largely dependent upon advertising (for financial reasons) and network scheduling, now this has been shifted to the consumer who appear more satisfied with this current model. “It is clear that the centralized, mass-disseminated cultural institution that has held sway since the middle of the twentieth century

is largely ceding to a regime premised on individual choice, marked by highly diversified content, atomized reception, and malleable technologies.” (Kompare, 2006, p335). Viewers can decide for themselves what they watch and when. So not only is the media based incentive to watch significant, but also the sense of personal ownership. It would be incorrect to assume that viewers were not deriving any form of pleasure from the consumption. VOD is providing the new technology for improved entertainment.

In conclusion it is undeniable that new technologies have not only impacted upon the television and film industry but also on cultural interactions and practices. Television viewing has remained an integral part of community but it is no longer consumed in groups but can be watched alone to then be discussed in groups or immediately online. So the improvements seen in social technology have impacted upon TV/Film technology and vice versa. The cultural changes seen in both viewing habits and consumption of content have become technologized. This is clear within other forms of media and entertainment services. “This “Netflixification” of media forms encourages consumers to binge watch (or listen, game, or read), to discover and explore new digital cultural productions, and to share the experience online with all their iFriends.” (Matrix, 2014, p134). At the same time this improvement in technology has allowed the consumer more control and influence on the entertainment they want to be provided with. While this has been a long process, it will also continue in this form if we are to learn from the history of this industry. This generation is now enjoying personalised content at a time they choose supported by constantly improving technology.

Chapter 3

Netflix Original Content – Why and How it has changed the television Industry.

In previous chapters it was mentioned how television consumption has evolved in line with technological advancements. This chapter will focus on a specific area of television that has evolved specifically from internet based video on demand, namely Netflix Original Content. This new form of content was introduced to the Netflix platform in 2012 with their first foray into original content with the series *Lilyhammer*, but it was not until the February 2013 release of the UK miniseries remake *House of Cards* that Netflix began to receive universal praise for the new area of television it was creating. Firstly we will look at the reasons why Netflix first decided to produce original content and the unique yet risky approaches that became necessary to their success. Then we will look at the distribution and production elements of Netflix that have been disruptive to the industry as a whole. Finally we will look at specific Netflix original content and the key differences that have set these series apart from the crowd.

Netflix had no choice but to start creating original content. That could be considered a bold statement but there is evidence that the company was in serious trouble as stock prices fell in the final quarter of 2011 (Allen et al, 2014). Competitors with better licensing deals and better content were emerging. Netflix executives had to give viewers a reason to continue with the service. So the natural progression forward was Original Content. In order to be successful it was important that the content created was ‘must see TV’. “Successful in these branding efforts, ‘must see’ drama has not only assisted the rise of newer networks but has also operated, through off-network video-on-demand (VoD) ‘windows’, as ‘killer content’ for the extension of Internet TV services.” (Dunleavy, 2009, p213). Plans to do just this began as early as 2010. An issue that appeared for Netflix was the popularity it was creating for online streaming, as

viewers began streaming more content online – more content had to be created and unfortunately for Netflix studios were aware of this. “That year, 2010, was the first in which CEO Reed Hastings expected subscribers to stream more content than they watched on DVD- which created a big problem since licensing streaming content is more expensive than owning a lot of DVDs.” (Laporte, 2014, p66). Big studios and networks began streaming their content on their own websites and direct competitors were securing lucrative streaming deals. The 2011 decision to split Netflix from the DVD postal service turned out to be disastrous and Netflix was losing more content than it was gaining. The reasoning behind the initial decision was reasonable, Netflix would continue as an online streaming service and *Qwickster* was to become a new company to look after the DVD postal service, as two individual businesses they could each focus on delivering the best quality. However, one of the main reasons why this turned out to be a bad decision was that the online service simply did not have the content to demand the monthly subscription. Users who were used to both services would have been able to order a DVD version of any content that was not available, so there was natural opposition. “On October 10th after a severe backlash, including a loss of 800,000 subscribers in the third quarter, Mr. Hastings reversed his decision to split the company.” (Allen et al, 2014, p140). Another area discussed in Allen et al (2014), is that in 2011, Netflix’s 3-year contract for content with Starz (premium cable and satellite television network) ended and so too did the availability of this content on the sites library. Without access to exclusive content, viewers would be more enticed to move to another service. Luckily for Netflix they were able to secure a deal for exclusive content from DreamWorks beginning in 2013, after their previous contract with HBO expired (Allen et al, 2014).

There are a number of factors regarding how Netflix original content was produced that make it significant. Firstly, they invested large sums of money into projects. Take the example of

House of Cards. The first season was released in 2013 and was a highly anticipated series given Netflix allowed a reported \$100 million dollars for its production. “Netflix paid a whopping \$100million for two seasons of *House of Cards* – before seeing a minute of footage. Six Emmys and dozens of nominations later, it’s safe to say the gamble worked” (Fast Company, 2016). Secondly, Netflix was fortunate enough to be able to attach well established names to the project. Renowned director David Fincher and award winning actor Kevin Spacey both signed on to *House of Cards* very early. Thirdly and very interestingly, Netflix effectively handed over creative control to the creators. Fincher, in a 2013 interview commented on how this was a new interesting way to work. “It’s like a book. It’s like you reading a chapter, set it down. Go get some Thai food, come back, fire it up again. It works in a different way. The pace of consumption in some way informs a kind of relationship that you have with the characters, which is very different from destination television.” (Sepinwall, 2013). Netflix effectively wanted to create a 13-hour movie, something which filmmakers can get excited about. The series was announced as 2 seasons with 26 episodes in total. Other competitors have followed suit. “HBO, the original un-network, made *True Detective*, a buddy drama debuting in January starring Woody Harrelson and Matthew McConaughey, its first straight-to-series order in years. Sources at HBO deny that this had anything to do with Netflix.” (Laporte, 2014, p102).

A fourth area to note here is that this was all with the significant absence of a pilot. Netflix has made a name for itself by granting the production of series without pilots, something which has been a principle piece of the industry since its beginning. TV pilots are seen to be important as they set the tone for the rest of the series. They are used to give producers a taste of the potential of a show before they commit financially and significantly they are used to ‘try out’ a cast to see if the actors are right and that they work well together. A pilot can be used to

introduce a characters universe. If we look at NBC's (later ABC) successful series *Scrubs* which ran from 2001 – 2010. The pilot '*My first Day*' introduced the main characters and was a good insight into how the show would work. "Starting the main character on his first day immediately forces the audience to identify with JD while discovering the world along with him. This is the hook. We meet a love interest, the best friend, the mentor and the jerk." (Lindauer, 2011). Finally and very significantly Netflix does not and does not plan to release any viewership data. Chief content officer Ted Sarandos has spoken openly that they have no plans to for the foreseeable future (Lowry, 2015), success has to be measured by fan reaction and media coverage. When we consider this with the fact that they do not seek traditional pilots it is very interesting as the public is unaware of how commercially successful a series is. Popularity therefore must be taken from media recognition and viewer communication (the area of social media influence will be discussed in the next chapter).

There are positives and negatives to not releasing data. For the viewer it can be beneficial to search and find your own content from reviewers or personal recommendations. The main issue critics have of this system is that it would be beneficial for the actors and creative teams who worked on the productions to obtain recognition if they were to be successful. "So when a filmmaker is trying to put together a movie and can't present financial backers with any information on how his or her previous work has performed on a substantial platform like Netflix, it puts them at a disadvantage." (Laporte, 2014, p103) It appears Netflix is so confident in its model and service that they could believe being on the platform at all is recognition of talent.

When Netflix began offering original content (with the exception of *Lilyhammer*), *House of Cards* (2013) and *Arrested Development (season 4, 2013)*, were continuations or adaptations

from already established programs. It was not until the release of *Orange is the New Black* in July 2013 that Netflix was truly able to show its production prowess, the show has been renewed for 7 seasons, with the fourth season to air in 2016. “The series has garnered more than 20 awards, including three Emmy Awards and two GLAAD Media Awards, and is a recipient of a Peabody Award and a Television Critics’ Assn. Award.” (Spangler, 2015). Frequently their programs detail complex storylines with themes of female sexuality, the LGBTQ community, racism and discrimination. It could be argued that Netflix has been so successful in this area because of its technological distribution path, it simply does not have to follow the traditional formats preset by broadcasting standards. Kompare (2006) makes a good point when speaking about publishing flow. This was the traditional method that could be applied to the film industry. “Book publishers and record labels are the archetypal firms in this conception, as income is generated by the sale of media material as tangible objects” (Kompare, 2006, p338). Film makers would effectively publish content and then charge viewers a set amount to consume it. Now that Netflix charges a monthly fee just to avail of the service they are not directly charging consumers to view individual content. As they are generating revenue in a new format they do not have to create content that will be universal accepted.

The emergence of video on demand television series has brought about many changes to the content of these shows also. Firstly, heavily serialized storytelling involving bigger casts and more complicated storytelling. This is due to the fact that the story makers can almost assume binge watching and that their viewers will be up to date with storylines so require no recaps or reminders. “On the one hand, the most obvious features of these new serial genres are storylines that span several episodes or even several seasons. On the other, these overarching structures also allow for more elaborate character development and a more complex web of

character interrelations than we might have been accustomed to in feature-length films.” (Klarer , 2014, p204). Secondly, shorter seasons are now being produced. Netflix is becoming known for commissioning seasons with 8 to 10 episodes examples include *Master of None* (2015), *Love* (2016) and *Flaked* (2016). This is interesting as they a shorter season can be viewed in less time and with the emergence of the binge watch, they could possibly be viewed within one sitting. This is a possible reason as to why they are being produced. Thirdly, the sheer ability to produce programs with large followings that traditional studios aren’t able to make (*Arrested Development* (2013), *Fuller House* (2016)). Netflix is able to cater to the market that wants these programs made specifically the viewers who wanted to see their favourite characters on screen again.

Finally, the fact that Netflix content (original or otherwise) does not contain advertising has caused a shift in how marketers are working. Product placement within the new content is necessary and thus far has not had a massive effect on viewer opinions. “When done effectively, integrated program sponsorship can be perceived by audiences as beneficial, in that it increases program realism rather than interrupt the viewing experience with irrelevant commercial messages.” (Matrix, 2014, p132). This is of course another economic change seen in recent years, another industry, namely the advertising industry adapting to the change in how television is displayed.

On HBO, a cable network that also does not include a break in its content for advertisements, we can take the example of *Sex and the City*, product placement became a signature of the show. “The series was aired in 30-minute instalments without commercial breaks, but it used product placement and advertised a lifestyle modelled on *Cosmopolitan* and its ilk.” (Allrath, 2005, p155).

In conclusion it is clear that Netflix original content has impacted upon the television and film industry. It was a necessary and profitably venture for them to undertake. And this involved the creation of new television forms. Netflix may have taken a risk by injecting such a large amount of money into their original content considering how the platform has been established and the impressive ensemble of people they have worked with, it has all worked out well. One thing is very clear, Netflix understands its audience and what they want. They have taken notice of the new trends in consumption that the new technologies they provide are producing.

Chapter 4

Internet Influence over Television Consumption and Online Communities.

This chapter will focus on another technological innovation that has had an effect on television consumption. Social media and the effect of social TV have had a massive impact on consumption levels. Until now this paper has focused mainly on factors increasing consumption habits. This chapter will also focus on the new phenomena of the spoiler effect, which can lead to decreased consumption. The internet is a device that both obstructs and facilitates television consumption. In the previous chapter Netflix was observed as an online platform for television consumption but this chapter will focus on factors on the internet that have also had an effect, specifically social media and online forums. “Prior to the Internet era, television viewers were perceived as passive receivers of texts that had been fully packaged for them and that did not require any action on their part.” (Casarini, 2014). This is an important area for research as the internet has become such an integral part of modern life and so it is natural that it would have an effect on television also. At any given time, there are c3.3billion people using the internet and currently 40% of the world’s population has an internet connection (Internet Live Stats, 2016). It is used for business, interactivity, news and information, communication and entertainment. With this in mind, I would like to examine social TV and its purpose and uses. The ‘spoiler effect’ will then be taken into consideration along with its effect on television consumption and finally, the impact of online forums and communities that have evolved online will be discussed.

Social TV is a new phenomenon that has occurred in only the last few years. Its emergence has come about from humans need for communication and their shared interests. Cesar and Geerts (2011, p27) have observed “Social TV allows remote viewers to socially interact with each

other via the television set, smart phones, tablets or the PC.” In a study conducted, they have outlined the four most dominant aspects of why people use social TV. Firstly, content selection and sharing. Viewers of television like to be informed about what they watch and allocate their time in the best possible way. With the increase of content and the increase in platforms available, viewers like to hear reviews and recommendations before committing the time that it now takes to consume the television content. Secondly, viewers use social TV for direct communication. This would relate to directly speaking to another viewer whilst consuming (texting, video calls etc.) or communicating via social media (examples include Facebook, twitter, Instagram) on posts or through instant messaging services. “As demonstrated by social media research, useful information includes ratings, comments, recommendations, and insights from the social network that can be directly used by the viewer or by a recommended system.” (Cesar and Greets, 2011, p30) Thirdly, community building. Groups of viewers who feel strongly about the same television shows are now able to group together for discussion and appreciation. Viewers seek out these forums and websites to comment on characters and plots with a large community of peers who have similar interests and opinions. Finally, status updates- this is the process of making others aware of what you are doing. This could involve tweeting that you are watching a certain episode. An example of this occurred during the recent season premiere of the HBO series *Game of Thrones* where there were an estimated 170,000 tweets sent during the transmission (Joyce, 2016).

The area of time-shifting, which was discussed in the previous chapter is prevalent here too as viewers are no longer constrained in their viewing habits by network schedules. In this instance, viewers are able to partake in conversations even after the show has aired. “Even though the comments are synchronized with the show, synchronization is not a key feature because time-shifting is common and people might add/read comments whenever they want.”

(Cesar and Greets, 2011, p30). Therefore, this is having two effects on consumption, firstly facilitating viewers with the option to time shift and watch at a different time and secondly facilitating the viewers with the option to time shift and communicate at a different time. If the conversations are taking place on the internet, then users are able to partake at a time that it suits them – further demonstrating the popularity and usefulness of time-shifting in other forms.

If we look specifically at using the internet while simultaneously consuming television, a study conducted in 2011 found four main reasons for the behaviour. These were 1) Social networking; 2) Additional information; 3) Recommendation and 4) Personalisation (Hess et al, 2011). This study also focused on the activity of switching between technologies/ devices while primarily focusing on television. Participants were a range of ages and demographics. This is an interesting theory because now we can no longer look at the technologies separately, since the results of this study show that viewers like to use multiple forms of technologies simultaneously. “She often talked asynchronously about the TV content with friends on the phone and face-to-face at school on the next day. During commercial breaks she used to chat with friends about the TV content if her chat partner watched the same show, otherwise they converse about other topics.” (Hess et al, 2011, p15). This result is showing how communication has changed, in that the participants would converse about the activity they were both doing or if they weren’t doing the same thing they would converse about something else. This shows that not only is the technology effecting how quickly we communicate but also that we are communicating at a much higher rate. Constant, immediate communication is now widespread within society. It would be difficult to imagine this change in behaviour without the increase in technological innovation. “Even if several kinds of media are running simultaneously, only one has the focus of the user. A typical example here is the media

behavior of a boy who played online games, chatted with buddies per voice chat and watched cartoons on TV simultaneously.” (Hess et al, 2011, p15). Arguments could be made that either the average attention span is shortening or perhaps the viewer is simply becoming better at utilising more than one device at a time.

So far this paper has focused on advances in internet connectivity and communications that have caused television consumption to increase with the average viewer. A new effect that has occurred with the increasing use of the internet with regards to television consumption and social TV is the spoiler. Tsang and Yan (2009) define this as “A spoiler is a summary or description of a narrative product (e.g., comic book, movie, novel, TV drama), in which a dramatic “twist”, such as the identity of the murderer in a detective story, is revealed” (p708). They then go on to define the emerging new phenomena of the spoiler effect, caused by presence and increase of spoilers and the availability to the viewer. “The spoiler effect denotes a phenomenon that a consumer’s interest in consuming a particular narrative is reduced after exposure to a spoiler.” (Tsang and Yan, 2009, p708). This is an interesting fact as we could assume that the viewers interest in the narrative of the show was what led them to seek out spoilers. But the act of finding the spoilers then leads the viewers interest to decrease which ultimately leads to a decrease in enjoyment of consumption. “A spoiler draws consumers’ attention to a twist in a plot, thus they will rely heavily on the plot to forecast their affective responses for consuming the narrative. However, a leaked plot creates a satiation or explanation effect that reduces the forecasted enjoyment.” (Tsang and Yan, 2009, p708).

If spoilers do lead to a decrease in enjoyment, then why do spoilers exist? A theory being proposed here is that the decrease in enjoyment from consumption of the show is replaced by an increase in enjoyment by being able to have control over the content. Scholars have

identified specific mechanisms that can define enjoyment. “The first mechanism is the phenomenological experience of enjoyment through immersion in a narrative world. Enjoyment through favourable outcomes of media exposure is the second mechanism. The third mechanism is a circumstance that enhances or lessens enjoyment.” (Brokadowski, 2015, p26). Applying these mechanisms here, specifically the third, a spoiler is an element that could potentially lessen enjoyment and therefore follows these rules. The increase in popularity of online streaming identified in previous chapters does illuminate the trend that viewers enjoy having control over their own viewing habits, this would include obtaining knowledge of narratives particularly interesting plot developments. The increase in immediacy of information on the internet and increase in communication have caused the viewer desire to obtain information about a show’s plots with immediacy also. The new enjoyment is derived from obtaining the information quickly and at a time that the viewer decides. “In the case of television, researchers note that people have agency to choose what programs they watch as a way of solving perceived problems. People burdened by basic needs, individual differences, and societal factors use television as a way of seeking gratifications in their own ways.” (Brokadowski, 2015, p28). Another interesting point here is that we have noticed that there has been an increase in social media use in conjunction with television consumption but a key area for spoilers to exist is on social media. So inadvertently viewers, whilst using social media, could obtain spoilers without wanting to. This becomes an interesting cycle as viewers obtain an interest in a program, derive enjoyment from this consumption, post or view social media about the program, obtain spoilers leading to an ultimate decrease in enjoyment.

As previously stated communication has increased exponentially and this includes communication to television content creators. Increasingly viewers of television shows are now able, using the internet, to communicate directly their feelings and opinions, not only to

each other but to the individuals responsible for the content they consume. If a viewer wanted to communicate about an episode or series, there are online forums now available for almost every piece of work. “Fan culture is at long last being deliberately and openly embraced by producer’s thanks in part to the ability of the internet not just to unite far-flung viewers but to make the fruits of their labor readily accessible to the mainstream—and to producers themselves.” (Andrejevic, 2008, p25). A forum is usually an online site where users are able to post and respond to thoughts or queries usually by text (Computer Hope, 2016). The content is not live and so can be read and supplemented at any time, this being another example of the importance of time shifting within modern television consumption. “What was once a private viewing experience shared locally is now a collective one shared nationally, and even internationally.” (Bielby, 1999, p38). Interestingly these forums, even fan maintained ones, usually have a code of conduct or forum etiquette which must be obeyed if a user wishes to join such a community. In a journal article published in 2008 Mark Andrejevic looks at the area of mediated interactivity. Using a popular online forum site TelevisionWithoutPity.com (Andrejevic, 2008), he discusses new media integration and responses to online commentary as an integral part of modern television production. “Interestingly, the promise of accountability seems to cut both ways: if TWoP provides producers with direct and immediate access to the viewpoints of the audience, it also fosters identification on the part of audiences with the viewpoint of producers.” (Andrejevic, 2008, p27). So not only are producers able to use fan sites as a valuable resource or even focus group but the members themselves gain enjoyment from participation also. “One reason that these relationships are so attractive to viewers is that they offer positive interactions with very limited risk of rejection. These relationships also have a direct connection to media enjoyment.” (Brokadowski, 2015, p27). Interesting examples of fan forums causing reactions to television narratives include ABC’s *Lost* where fan began theorizing that the island, on which the series was set, was a form of

purgatory (Paskin, 2010). This did in fact prove to be true when the series ended in 2010. Another example of fan theories becoming true is HBO's *Game of Thrones* where fans were shocked with the surprise death of John Snow, a lead character, in the season 5 finale. Fans theorized that the character was not really dead and would in fact be resurrected by the Red Woman (Chandler, 2016), this became fact in the sixth season of the show.

Forum members or fandom members (groups of individuals who share a passion for something) are connected quite strongly and although the relationships between members may not ever be physical, the existence of them on the internet can be quite significant. The fundamental bonds on which these relationships or parasocial relationships exist upon can be similar to physical relationships in terms of shared interests and mutual respect. "Although the parasocial relationships have less emotional satisfaction than interpersonal relationships, they are significant in shaping viewers' attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs." (Brokadowski, 2015, p27)

In conclusion, this chapter highlighted the internet's strong hold on television production for producers and areas where it has effected viewer consumption. Social TV is strongly present within culture today and it could be fair to say that this is how new television content is consumed. The process and act of being social is now an integral part of watching television and the ease of which we can communicate facilitates this even more. The emergence of the Spoiler Effect and online forums are social branches of cultural nuances that are in line with the increase in popularity of television as a cultural norm. It is fair to say that these trends will continue in the future especially with the strengthening bonds of online communities.

Conclusion

The increase in television content has led to an increase in television consumption, this we can be sure of. When a commodity such as this becomes popular it is inevitable that companies and studios would attempt to improve and diversify the options available to viewers. In the modern age of television there has never before been so many options for consumption of content. This paper attempted to focus on the emerging trends in television consumption and the technologies behind these trends. The main areas explored were the creation of television technologies, the invention of VHS and DVD, the recent introduction of VOD and original Netflix content and the importance of the internet.

In chapter 1, the origins of television production were discussed. This was an important area to explore in order to set out how television became what it is today. The differing opinions and practices between the UK and USA was an interesting occurrence and has shown the complexity and changing nature of television production. In the UK we saw an opinion that television should be enjoyed by the whole population and treated as public service commodity. This trend has evolved but the problems relating to new technologies remained. It was noted that early television consumption was a very social practice. Television consumption involved the community and viewing was done in groups. This is very significant if we are to compare this to modern day consumption, where it is now done alone and at a time the viewer, not the broadcaster, chooses.

Chapter 2 focused on the impact of early technological advancements. When the VHS tape and the DVD were first introduced there was a lot of resistance from large studios. This was an important development as the popularity of these platforms is now immersed within television culture. In fact it was the popularity of this form of television that allowed for the introduction

of online streaming television consumption. The theory of time shifting was introduced in this chapter and was found to be of relevance to other areas of the paper also. Viewers having the option to view their content at a time that suited them has been revolutionary in the area of television consumption. The early resistance to VOD turned out to be minor and the popularity of online streaming services such as Netflix is very significant. This chapter also focused on specific online streaming services such as Netflix, Hulu and Amazon prime; their emergence is a testament to the popularity of this as a platform for television consumption. It is clear that the ‘netflixification’ of television consumption is an important trend.

Chapter 3 then looked at Netflix Original Content as a new trend for television consumption. Netflix is now disrupting the industry and its award winning content is proving very popular with critics and viewers. As with the impact of DVD box sets in the early 1980s it is clear that consumption does in fact change with the introduction of new technologies. Several factors have been outlined as to why Netflix Original Content was successful most notably the large budgets that were assigned to certain productions and the absence of pilots that were previously integral in television institutions. The mere presence of a new platform for television within the industry is a factor in the changing landscape of consumption. With this new platform has also come changes to television narratives. There were four identified within this paper, serialised storytelling, short seasons, increased flexibility and the absence of advertising. These are all critical changes that are affecting the way stories are being written and being told. Again the popularity of Netflix original content and online streaming services has shown the viewer preference for this style of television production.

The final chapter of the paper discussed the internet's role in new emerging trends in television consumption. The world is more connected than ever. There are multiple social media networks and frameworks in place for immediate and constant communication and with this we have seen the rise of online communities. The subject of social TV was discussed here. Social TV itself has emerged from social interactions through or aided by television. Notably these include selection and sharing, and direct communication. The theory of time-shifting was applicable here also, not only in regards to the consumption of television content but the viewer is now also able to take part in the conversations at a time that suits them. This paper outlined some of the reasons that viewers also complete internet activities whilst consuming television, mainly for social networking, additional information and recommendation. The area of device switching was also looked at which is important as this demonstrates viewer's ease with utilising new technologies. The 'spoiler effect' was identified as an emergent trend that has been magnified with the internet. The overall effect of this leads to a decrease in enjoyment for the average viewer. And finally the area of online communities was examined. A lot of online communities are established from a shared interest, with television being a good example. This is important for television content creators as well as they are able to communicate directly with their viewers and see how they are feeling in an unofficial focus group capacity. Members of these groups, it has been found also find the membership and feeling of community a worthwhile activity as they form bonds over a shared interest. This is an interesting point as it signals back to the communities that were formed when television was first introduced but shows the technological advancements that have taken place.

It would be worthwhile to continue with research into this area given the emerging trends that are occurring with both television consumption and production. The evaluation of previous trends would be valuable to television networks and producers given the influence on

consumption. But it is clear that television consumption has changed and evolved over time in line the technological advancements that have been made in this area.

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