

Trinity University
Digital Commons @ Trinity

Communication Honors Theses

Communication Department

5-2016

"Glued to the Sofa": Exploring Guilt and Television Binge-Watching Behaviors

Charles N. Wagner

Trinity University, cwagner@trinity.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.trinity.edu/comm_honors

 Part of the [Communication Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Wagner, Charles N., ""Glued to the Sofa": Exploring Guilt and Television Binge-Watching Behaviors" (2016). *Communication Honors Theses*. 11.

http://digitalcommons.trinity.edu/comm_honors/11

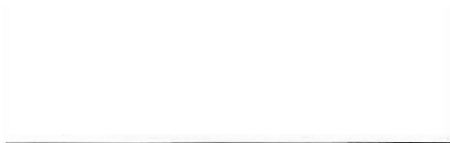
This Thesis open access is brought to you for free and open access by the Communication Department at Digital Commons @ Trinity. It has been accepted for inclusion in Communication Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Trinity. For more information, please contact jcostanz@trinity.edu.

**“Glued to the Sofa”:
Exploring Guilt and Television Binge-Watching Behaviors**

Charles Wagner

A DEPARTMENT HONORS THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION AT TRINITY UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION WITH
DEPARTMENTAL HONORS

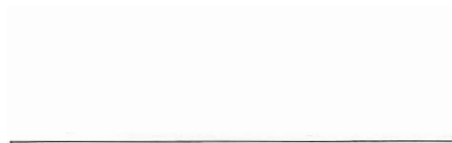
DATE APRIL 15, 2016



THESIS ADVISOR



DEPARTMENT CHAIR



Sheryl R. Tynes, AVPAA

Student Agreement

I grant Trinity University ("Institution"), my academic department ("Department"), and the Texas Digital Library ("TDL") the non-exclusive rights to copy, display, perform, distribute and publish the content I submit to this repository (hereafter called "Work") and to make the Work available in any format in perpetuity as part of a TDL, Institution or Department repository communication or distribution effort.

I understand that once the Work is submitted, a bibliographic citation to the Work can remain visible in perpetuity, even if the Work is updated or removed.

I understand that the Work's copyright owner(s) will continue to own copyright outside these non-exclusive granted rights.

I warrant that:

- 1) I am the copyright owner of the Work, or
- 2) I am one of the copyright owners and have permission from the other owners to submit the Work, or
- 3) My Institution or Department is the copyright owner and I have permission to submit the Work, or
- 4) Another party is the copyright owner and I have permission to submit the Work.

Based on this, I further warrant to my knowledge:

- 1) The Work does not infringe any copyright, patent, or trade secrets of any third party,
- 2) The Work does not contain any libelous matter, nor invade the privacy of any person or third party, and
- 3) That no right in the Work has been sold, mortgaged, or otherwise disposed of, and is free from all claims.

I agree to hold TDL, Institution, Department, and their agents harmless for any liability arising from any breach of the above warranties or any claim of intellectual property infringement arising from the exercise of these non-exclusive granted rights."

I choose the following option for sharing my thesis (required):

- Open Access (full-text discoverable via search engines)
 Restricted to campus viewing only (allow access only on the Trinity University campus via digitalcommons.trinity.edu)

I choose to append the following [Creative Commons license](#) (optional):

[Attribution-NonCommerical-NoDerivatives 4.0](#)

Abstract

In order to better understand the various aspects of television binge-watching behaviors and determine how guilt coincides with binge viewership, researchers administered a survey to 530 adults. Quantitative and qualitative analysis of responses suggested that viewers who watch less TV overall feel guiltier about binge-watching. Comedies and dramas were the most often binged genres, though viewers who binge-watched teen dramas felt guiltiest. Streaming services and digital video recorders (DVRs) were the most common platforms used for binge-watching television; those who used streaming services felt high levels of guilt afterwards, while those who used DVRs felt very little. Results indicated that the social context for viewership and the medium through which television was binged were not associated with guiltiness. In responses to open-ended questions, participants mentioned binge-watching motivations such as background noise for multitasking, avoiding spoilers, maximizing social currency, and escapism.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my thesis advisors, whose infinite patience provided me with the help I needed to complete this study. Dr. Delwiche, Dr. Henderson, and Dr. Huesca, you were all life savors. I'll never forget the hard work that we accomplished together.

I would also like to thank my girlfriend, Analia, who spent far too many nights listening to me complain about my problems. Without her, I doubt I could have gotten this far. Lia, I love you, and I can't wait for what our future holds together.

Of course, I could not have accomplished any of this without the support of my parents. My father, who was always just a phone call away, and my mother, who showed me what it meant to really work. I love you both very much.

Lastly, I would like to thank my friend, Mason Stark, who kept me company throughout this ordeal. Our daily Frisbee golf sessions ensured that I stepped outside, if only briefly. Thank you, Mason.

Table of Contents

Abstract	iii
Acknowledgments	iv
Introduction	1
Literature Review	2
Guilt vs. Guilt-Free Television Viewing	2
Amount and Duration of Binge-Watching	4
Genre	7
Social Context	8
Viewing Technology	10
Methods	14
Sampling and Procedures	14
Perceptions of Binge Viewership	16
Amount and Duration	16
Genre	17
Social Viewing vs. Solitary Viewing	18
Content Platform	18
Viewing Medium	19
Findings	19
Perceptions of Binge Viewership	19
Amount and Duration	20
Genre	22
Social Viewing vs. Solitary Viewing	22
Content Platform	23
Viewing Medium	24
Discussion	25
Defining Binge Viewership	25
Amount and Duration	26
Genre	27
Social Viewing vs. Solitary Viewing	29
Content Platform	30
Viewing Medium	32
Insight from Open-Ended Responses	33
Conclusion	34
Works Cited	37
Appendix 1	49

Introduction

The past fifteen years have witnessed a variety of developments in television audience viewership. A growing number of casual viewers enjoy TV shows at their own discretion rather than through the linear schedule of broadcast or cable TV. In 2014 alone, Nielsen reported a more abrupt decline in traditional television viewing than any other year in history (Luckerson, 2014). As streaming services and other products have placed viewership authority into the hands of the audience, some viewers have become “cord-cutters,” members that cut their cable subscriptions in favor of cheaper streaming alternatives (Evangelista, 2015). A large population of cord-cutters has coincided with an increased tendency to binge-watch television rather than abide by traditional viewing habits. One avenue through which binge-watching behaviors have increased is with the use of streaming services. In fact, a Harris Interactive survey commissioned by Netflix found that 61% of television streamers surveyed binge-watched television regularly (Netflix, 2013).

Like any growing phenomenon, binge-watching has received copious amounts of positive and negative media attention. In her article titled “The Netflix Effect: Teens, Binge-watching, and Digital Media Trends,” author Sidneyeve Matrix (2014) argued that Generation Y and Generation Z viewers use binge-watching for relaxation and inspiration, as well as a way to connect with each other beyond the typical form of television viewership. This social component has been acknowledged by others, including Michele Willens (2013) of *The Huffington Post*. She declared binge-watching as the new date night for couples and described the positive connection she felt from “binge-bonding” with her friends.

However, opposing arguments have been made for the dangers of binge-watching. To Greg Dillon, an associate professor of Psychology at Weill Cornell Medical College, binge-

watching was equivalent to traditional drug addictions, where viewers were simply chasing another “fix” with every new episode (Smith, 2014). Similarly, Shuhua Zhou—a telecommunication and film professor at University of Alabama—argued that any behavior that includes the word “binge” connotes excess, which is never good for the brain or body (Linville, 2013). In a recent study, Sung, Kang, and Lee (2015) reported that viewers who reported the most amount of binge-watching also demonstrated symptoms of addiction, including higher levels of loneliness, depression, and reduced self-control. Other press commentators have also perceived an addictive element to binge-watching and its negative effects on viewers (Hsu, 2014; Willens, 2013). One major outcome from binge-watching that is frequently cited in press articles is guiltiness (Cruz, 2014; Feeney, 2014; Goldstein, 2013; Herrera, 2014). However, whether guilt is a necessary or even frequent outcome of binge-watching is still unclear.

The purpose of this study is to understand how factors of television viewership are associated with binge-watching. These factors, including guiltiness, amount and duration, social context for viewership, genre of television viewed, content platform used, and viewing medium, have all been acknowledged in literature as significant aspects of the behavior. However, because of the lack of agreement in academia and industry on whether guiltiness is a necessary outcome of binge viewership, feelings of guilt will be the primary focus for this research, and compared to all other factors. By doing so, the relationship between guilt and binge-watching may become clear.

Literature Review

Guilt vs. Guilt-Free Television Viewing

Since binge-watching television became an increasingly popular phenomenon, critics have associated the behavior with guiltiness. An article from the *Washington Post* went so far as

to speculate that the potential guiltiness from binge-watching results from the stigma surrounding the word itself, and the negative connotation that “binge” has developed in mainstream society (Goldstein, 2013). Beau Willimon, creator of the Netflix hit series *House of Cards*, argued in the article that this stigma will not last as binge-watching becomes the new viewing norm.

For now, guiltiness remains a common outcome of entertainment media usage. Panek (2014) performed a study that focused on college students’ levels of self-control and how they interacted with leisure media such as television and social networking sites. In the study, he determined that students with lower self-control tended to spend more time with leisure media such as television. Consequentially, they felt guilt for that decision after they experienced the ramifications of choosing media over the long-term benefits of studying. Another study confirmed the lure of media on individuals with low self-control when it found that people with desires to engage in media over their work typically wound up doing just that (Hofmann, Vohs, & Baumeister, 2012). *HBO/Cinemax* vice president of program planning Andrew Goldman speculated, “college students are more likely to binge-watch than adults because they are not set to regular schedules or busy spending time with spouses or children” (Griffie, 2013). In other words, the flexible schedule of college life lends more opportunity for students to binge-watch.

In addition to factors related to low self-control, Reinecke, Hartmann, & Eden (2014) found that those suffering ego depletion from stressful work days and used media as a stress reducer tended to feel guilty for doing so. The study determined that those who needed television as a stress reducer due to their overworked lives paradoxically experienced guiltiness more frequently, as media usage felt like a form of procrastination rather than attempted relaxation. In this case, busy work schedules caused media relaxation to backfire, and guilt to arise.

Not all binge-watching seems to trigger a guilty response, however. Many viewers report that relaxation, rather than guilt, results from their bingeing behavior. The Netflix study (2013) found that 73% of the 1,500 streamers polled said they had positive feelings towards binge-watching, and 76% said, “watching multiple episodes was a welcome refuge from their busy lives” (Netflix, 2013). However, there is inherent bias in the findings from this survey since all the respondents polled were already subscribers to Netflix’s streaming services. Due to the infancy of research into binge-watching behaviors, results of the Harris Interactive survey will still be frequently cited in this study. Based on the Netflix Harris Interactive Survey, the ability to stream multiple episodes of television in a row can serve as a welcome escape for those with stressful schedules. But these various accounts exemplify how the involvement of guilt in binge viewership and media consumption is currently inconclusive.

Beyond guilt, there are several facets of binge-watching that appear frequently in the discussion of television audiences and audience behavior. These various factors have evolved as television has developed. One example of an important aspect of viewership is the total amount of time viewers spend watching TV, and how long their viewing sessions are. Other important factors include the genre of television watched, the social context of the viewing session, and the technologies available for usage, such as content platforms and viewing media. All of these various factors will be discussed and analyzed in this study.

Amount and Duration of Binge-Watching

Amount of Episodes Binge-Watched. Binge-watching television is clearly popular and on the rise. In one survey of over 1,000 television consumers, over 50% of viewers self-identified as binge-watchers (PriceWaterhouseCoopers, 2014), and Matrix (2014) found that 69% of television viewers aged 13-49 binge-watch “at least sometimes.” But what exactly is binge-

watching? This question has received numerous answers from a variety of parties. In 2013, the Oxford Dictionary defined the act “binge-watch” as follows: “[To] watch multiple episodes of (a television program) in rapid succession, typically by means of DVDs or digital streaming.” However, this vague definition applied no practical or operational structure to the behavior. The digital video recording company, TiVo (2015a), defined binge-watching as “Watching at least three episodes of the same series on the same day.” Similarly, in Netflix’s Harris Interactive study (2013), respondents defined binge-watching as “Watching between 2-6 episodes of the same TV show in one sitting.” In both instances, the operational definition quantified the amount of episodes viewed in one sitting as a means of measuring binge-watching behavior. According to these definitions, the more episodes of a show that are viewed in succession, the more exacerbated the behavior becomes.

Duration of Binge-watching Session. Though these definitions from Netflix and TiVo provide concrete points at which television viewing becomes binge viewing, there is an inherent flaw in the way that they’re defined; they do not address the vastly different lengths of television shows, or how this could affect the amount of time someone spends binge-watching. In an article for *The Atlantic*, author Nolan Feeney criticized Netflix’s definition of binge-watching for that very reason: “By this definition, I could watch two episodes of *30 Rock* in a row and call that a binge—even though that’s less than half the time it takes to watch a typical movie” (Feeney, 2014). Though the number of episodes viewed is the most common way to determine when binge-watching occurs, it does not consider how much time the viewer spends with the medium. Additionally, the variety of standards for binge viewership that are articulated by these definitions emphasize the lack of agreement on what binge-watching really is. Researchers may create definitions of this behavior for the purposes of their research, but viewers could hold

different perceptions of binge-watching altogether. Therefore, in order to better understand the behavior itself, this study asked:

RQ₁: What do contemporary audiences consider to be binge-watching?

With a better understanding of the behavior itself, the next step was to identify how guilt was incorporated. Keeping in line with the critiques of Feeney (2014) on the importance of time spent binge-watching, this study asked:

RQ₂: What is the relationship between amount/duration of binge-watching and guilty feelings?

In trying to determine how guilty respondents would feel for various levels of binge viewership, this study formulated two hypotheses: one focusing on the amount of television watched, and a second focusing on the duration of a typical viewing session. For amount of television viewed overall, it seemed likely that the more television watched by the respondent, the more likely that they'd feel guilty for binge-watching. In terms of duration of viewership, respondents who typically spent more time in front of the TV in one sitting would, by definition, be binge-watching for longer periods. Based on how media consumption has affected viewer guilt in previous studies, this study hypothesized:

H_{1a}: Respondents who report watching a greater amount of television will be more likely to feel guilty for binge-watching than participants who report watching a smaller amount of television.

H_{1b}: Respondents who report having longer duration binge-watching sessions will be more likely to feel guilty than participants who report shorter duration binge-watching sessions.

Genre

When someone watches a TV show these days, that show's genre is not always easily determined. Mittell (2004) explained, "television programming in the postmodern era is marked by such genre hybridity that the notion of pure generic forms is outdated" (p. xii). Though it's true that television genres have experienced a diversity of crossbreeding in recent years, some have remained significantly prevalent, especially in newer platforms like streaming services.

Writer James Poniewozik (2015) for *The New York Times* argued that the new viewing opportunities that streaming provides has transformed television so drastically that it has created a new genre all on its own. He acknowledged that certain genres have found success in the streaming world; specifically, comedies have made a smooth transition into streaming services like Netflix. Comedy as a genre, he articulated, is typically one of the first to ease into new media. This might explain the score of critically acclaimed hit comedies that were produced by streaming services in 2015, such as *Master of None*, *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt*, and *Catastrophe*. However, Poniewozik clarified that "streaming has best served a certain kind of plot-heavy, competent-but-not-revolutionary drama" (2015). These shows, like *House of Cards*,

provided viewers with enough fun and intrigue to keep them returning again and again: the perfect recipe for bingeing behavior.

Supporting Boniewicz's (2015) analysis, TiVo Research and Analytics reported the two genres most binged were dramas and crime dramas (TiVo, 2014). There is not, however, any indication about which genres resulted in increased guiltiness beyond the reports of individual viewers, such as one journalist who felt guilt after bingeing too much of the political drama *The Good Wife* (Jesdanun, 2014). For this reason, this study asked the question:

RQ₃: Among contemporary audiences, to what extent is the genre of television binge-watched associated with feelings of guilt from binge-watching?

Social Context

Social Viewing vs. Solitary Viewing. Throughout the 1960s and the peak of viewer sentiment for television in America, the ability to control the time that a show could be viewed was practically impossible (Bower, 1985). Networks had routine schedules for when they aired shows and families would gather in the family room to enjoy whatever was on at the time. In this way, television served as a reliable social experience in the daily routines of American families (Lull, 1990). Because there was very little variability in the shows that were offered nationwide, television also fostered a community of discussion as people shared their thoughts and opinions about TV shows with each other around the water cooler (Lotz, 2009). The lack of diversity in television options contributed greatly to the popularity of individual shows and allowed for viewers to connect with each other through their favorite shows.

However, audiences became more and more segmented over time. The combination of programming diversification and increased audience autonomy dissolved the culture of

viewership connectivity by allowing individuals to take control over how and when they watched television (Lotz, 2007). With the freedom to watch television programs at any time, the illusion that people were all watching the same shows together slowly disappeared. The improvement of viewing technologies and the increasing availability of TV shows meant that the social television experience was at risk of being replaced by a deeply private one.

But as television progressed, this potential outcome was avoided. With the advent of digital video and high-speed Internet connections, the ability to time shift television and watch anything, anywhere created a new kind of viewing community that was immediate and global (Bourdaa & Hong-Mercier, 2012). Television fans were suddenly able to watch their favorite shows at any time and instantly go online afterwards to discuss those shows with others around the world. This kind of open technological environment made many television fans more active in creating social networks built around television fandoms and finding others to share their interests (Kackman et al., 2011). As the the creator of *House of Cards*, Beau Willimon, explained, shows like his “have proven [that] these communities find each other” (Goldstein, 2013).

The Netflix Harris Interactive survey (2013) confirmed that binge-watching isn't necessarily a solitary experience. The study reported that 51% of television streamers acknowledged that they'd rather watch television with at least one other person, while 39% of those who saved TV shows for later admitted that they do so because they preferred to watch their favorite shows with someone else (Netflix, 2013).

At least one recent study had contradictory results regarding the social aspects of binge-watching. Sung, Kang, and Lee (2015) found a significant correlation between people who binge-watched television and increased feelings of loneliness and depression. This identified that

binge-watching can be potentially damaging to the viewer. Furthermore, several articles have identified guiltiness as a common outcome from binge-watching television (Cruz, 2014; Feeney, 2014; Herrera, 2014). With the knowledge of Sung, Kang, and Lees' (2015) findings and the acknowledgement of guilt due to binge viewership from various observers, this study asked:

RQ₄: How is the social context (social viewing vs. solitary viewing) of binge-watching related to feelings of guilt?

In their study, Sung, Kang, and Lee (2015) found that binge-watchers tended to feel lonelier than non-binge-watchers. This was reiterated in an article for *Reader's Digest*, where Stone (2016) agreed that binge-watching alone can be an "isolating activity," and that spending too much time binge-watching in isolation can take "time away from other essential things in life." Based on the nature of these findings and comments, this study predicted:

H₂: Viewers who binge-watch television alone will experience more guilt than viewers who binge-watch television socially.

Viewing Technology

In the television industry, new viewing technologies have allowed for a wide variety in audience behaviors. However, there is an important distinction between the platform through which content is transmitted, and the medium through which content is viewed. The former focuses on the various services that viewers can choose from to receive television content. Content platforms range from traditional broadcast and cable networks, to newer options like streaming services and digital video recorders (DVRs). Meanwhile, viewing media include all

the possible screens that are capable of playing television for the viewer. Some options, like TV screens, have accompanied television content since its original conception. Others, like phones, tablets, and laptops, have increased mobility of viewership and changed the television landscape in drastic ways. This study will consider both types of viewing technology and attempt to determine how guiltiness and binge viewership associates with each.

Content Platform. Due to the many improvements in viewing technology, television no longer exists solely from broadcast or cable transmissions. In fact, audiences can now watch TV through a variety of tools, of which over-the-top (OTT) is the newest and most popular. OTT services provide television and movie content to users over the Internet. They are known as over-the-top service providers because they go “over the top” of traditional distribution channels to reach the consumer (Hall, 2010). The most popular OTT services include Netflix, Amazon Instant Video, and Hulu (Keegan, 2015). The current subscriber base for Netflix alone has surpassed 75,000,000 members, with subscribers in over 190 countries worldwide (Netflix Profile, 2015). Hulu, meanwhile, has experienced massive growth in its subscriber base, increasing by 50% since 2014 (Hulu, 2015). In fact, CEO Mike Hopkins announced in April of 2015 that Hulu had surpassed nine million subscribers (Kastrenakes, 2015).

Though there are academic and journalistic sources that identify Millennials as the leading streamers of television (Matrix, 2014; Snider, 2015; Steel & Marsh, 2015; Nelson, 2013) and the leading binge-watching demographic (eMarketer, 2016; PriceWaterhouseCoopers 2014), they are not the only viewers who use streaming services and binge-watch television. For example, one study from the Horowitz Research Center identified that adults aged 18 to 50+ viewed television through streaming services to some extent (Horowitz, 2015), and the Deloitte Digital Democracy Survey found that 68 percent of the 2,000 customers surveyed reported

bingeing: far more than just the Millennial generation (Deloitte, 2015). It was for this reason that all adults were considered for the purposes of this study.

Other television viewing platforms include Video-On-Demand (VOD) and digital video recorders (DVRs). According to *Oxford Dictionary*, Video-On-Demand is “A system in which viewers choose their own filmed entertainment, by means of a PC or interactive TV system, from a wide selection” (Video-On-Demand, n.d.). VOD is a potential savior for cable providers that are trying to maintain their audience shares; for example, Comcast acknowledged that its subscribers use DVRs less than the national average due to the increased popularity of their VOD services (Stelter & Chozick, 2013). Plus, with companies like Netflix poaching customers from cable and broadband providers, VOD has proven an essential tool for these companies to remain competitive in the changing television market.

DVRs, another precursor to the streaming service, increased audience autonomy by offering viewers the ability to time shift their favorite shows and movies. A recent study by Smith & Krugman (2010) confirmed the popularity of time shifting by DVR owners when it found that the most used function of the DVR was the playing of saved recordings. In fact, the audience measurement service PowerWatch indicated that by 2008, over one-third of all the content viewed on television networks (both broadcast and cable) was time shifted due to DVR and TiVo usage, and that this percentage swelled to over half of all viewing for prime time shows on major broadcast networks (McClellan, 2008).

Naturally, television can still be viewed over traditional channels such as cable and broadband connections. These services capitalized on binge-watching tendencies long before OTT services or VOD existed by scheduling marathon runs of popular television shows. One

cable channel, FXX, aired a *The Simpsons* marathon in 2014 that included all 552 *The Simpsons* episodes. This marathon more than tripled its primetime audience as a result (Kissell, 2014).

Because of all the ways viewers can now binge-watch television, be it through OTT provider, DVR, VOD service, or traditional cable or broadband connections, this study asked the question:

RQ₅: Among contemporary audiences, to what extent is the content platform used for binge-watching television associated with guilt from binge-watching?

Viewing Medium. The first changes in how television was viewed occurred as families transitioned from single TV to multi-TV households (Bower, 1985). Whereas the television used to operate as an anchor for family activity within the family room or living room, the arrival of multi-TV households allowed children to branch off and enjoy the shows they watched separately (Comstock & Scharrer, 1999). This decline of family viewing increased drastically as laptops became more popular in the 1990s and 2000s and children and teenagers spent longer periods of time on private screens. By the year 2000, 75% of teens already had personal televisions in their bedrooms and spent an average of two hours a day online (Goodman, 2001). More recently, Leubsdorf (2015) reported from the Labor Department's 2013 *American Time Use Survey* that the average American spent two hours and forty-nine minutes a day watching television, or a staggering seventeen hours and forty-three minutes of TV a week! Nielsen (2015) identified in its *Q3 Total Audience Report* that adults in America spent between 44-53% of their media time in front of a TV; this still pales the 21-29% of time that Americans spent in front of other digital devices such as PCs or tablets.

However, the portability and mobility of devices has increased so rapidly in the past ten years that laptops are now in jeopardy. This is because in today's mobile society, cell phones are replacing laptops as the primary computing device. Some predict that laptops may even become irrelevant by 2016 due to the increased processing power that smart phones boast (Bonnington, 2015). Already, 10 percent of Americans own smartphones with no other form of access to high-speed Internet (Smith, 2015).

Mobile growth is not just confined to smart phones, either; tablet usage is also increasing, with over one billion people owning tablets worldwide (eMarketer, 2015). This transition to increased portability means that television can now be watched almost anywhere there is an Internet connection. The diffusion of mobile technology in society has already changed television viewing behaviors. According to a recent poll by PBS, nearly 50 percent of those who watch television do so on their computers or mobile devices (Goodavage, 2013). Increasing ease of access to mobile and portable technology means that the days of television constriction are near an end. Now, TV can be viewed not just within the living room or bedroom, but anywhere the viewer wants, and on a multitude of devices. For this reason, this study asked:

RQ₆: Among contemporary audiences, to what extent is the viewing medium used for binge-watching television associated with guilt from binge-watching?

Methods

Sampling and Procedures

In an attempt to understand how binge-watching and guilt interacted among a larger television viewing audience, this study administered a web-based survey to 530 adults during a three-week period in March. This survey included a combination of close-ended and open-ended

questions. Rather than focus on a specific segment of the television population, this survey examined the television population as a whole to identify how binge-watching and guilt interacted among a larger television viewing audience.

A pretest was conducted with 21 people who provided feedback on the clarity of questions, the survey flow, and overall length of the survey instrument. The final survey (see Appendix 1) included 37 questions and contained five sections: “Demographic Information,” “Frequency of Viewership,” “Perceptions of Binge-Watching,” “Television Viewing Behaviors,” and “Reflections on Viewership.” In “Frequency of Viewership,” participants were asked two questions that focused on how much television they watched. One question asked about the hours of television viewed in the last week (*amount* of binge-watching), while the second asked about the hours of TV viewed in a typical sitting (*duration* of binge-watching). For “Perceptions of Binge-Watching,” participants answered questions that clarified when binge-watching takes place. These questions focused on various genres, episode lengths, and durations of television viewing sessions. “Television Viewing Behaviors” included multiple series of five-point “Never” to “Always” Likert-type scale questions to determine aspects of respondent viewing behavior. These aspects included amount and duration of viewership, genre viewed, social context for viewership, platform used, and medium used. The next section, “Reflections on Viewership,” asked respondents about their guilt from the binge-watching behaviors that they previously confirmed. This section also used five-point Likert-type scale questions. In order to create legitimate guilt measurements for every facet of viewership, each individual series of Likert guilt questions in this section were averaged to create composite guilt scores.

The survey was distributed by way of a convenience and snowball sample through several channels. First, the survey was posted on several Facebook walls, including the author’s.

The request was made that any respondent who participated posted the survey on their wall as well, so that a snowball effect took place. The survey was also released to faculty and staff of a small liberal arts university in the Southwest, students of a large public university in the Midwest, and other students attending institutions in these same regions. Lastly, the survey was posted on subReddit forums, blogs, and personal email lists. All respondents were offered access to the final version of this study in exchange for their time in taking the survey. Because a snowball sample was used to gather responses, it is not possible to generalize these findings to the broader binge-watching population. However, the extent of quantitative and qualitative results from this study provide ample information about binge-watching behaviors, and create a strong basis and new directions for future research.

Because all survey questions were non-mandatory, variation existed in the number of missing responses for all variables. In every statistical test and analysis performed, missing values were eliminated from consideration.

Perceptions of Binge Viewership

Participants were asked several close-ended survey questions that clarified their perceptions of binge-watching. Summary statistics identified the most common responses for how long a viewer must watch episodes of different lengths to engage in bingeing behavior, the types of television media that can be binge-watched, and the number of series that can be viewed in one sitting for binge watching to have occurred.

Amount and Duration

To answer the hypotheses about length of television viewership and binge-watching guilt, participants were asked two multiple-choice questions about their television viewership behaviors. The first question measured the hours of television viewed in the past week, while the

second asked about the hours of television viewed in a typical sitting. Answers from both questions were recoded into two groups. In order to draw a distinction between low-amount and high-amount viewers, the independent variable of hours of television viewed last week was recoded into two levels: 1-10 hours and 11 or more hours. In order to explore the difference between low-duration and high-duration viewers, the second independent variable of typical hours of TV watched in a typical viewing session was recoded into the following groups: one to two hours of TV in one sitting and three or more hours of TV in one sitting. To measure guilt from binge-watching, three five-point “Never” to “Always” Likert-type scale questions that asked about guiltiness from binge viewership were averaged together to form a composite guilt score. According to the criteria suggested by Leech, Barrett, & Morgan (2005), this composite guilt score demonstrated very strong internal validity using Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficient ($\alpha = .891$). For each hypothesis, an independent sample t-test was performed using the appropriate recoded viewership variable as the IV and the composite guilt score variable as the DV.

Genre

The second research question asked: What is the relationship between amount/duration of binge-watching and guilty feelings? In order to determine which genres were binge-watched, respondents were asked questions from two series of five-point Likert-type scale questions ranging from “Never” to “Always.” The first series of questions asked respondents how often they binge-watched the following popular television genres: “Comedy,” “Drama,” “Fantasy/Science Fiction,” “Animation/Anime,” “Comedy-Drama,” “Teen Drama,” and “Horror/Thriller.” Genres were chosen using “The Best TV Shows to Binge Watch” (2015) from *Ranker*, a dynamic, crowd-sourced list which received 22,889 votes for the top 100 shows to

binge-watch. All TV shows from the list were categorized by their self-identifying genres, and the resulting seven most popular genres were chosen for the Likert-type scale questions. Later in the survey, respondents who had reported watching a certain genre were asked how guilty they felt for binge-watching that genre. Summary statistics revealed common trends for guilt levels across genres.

Social Viewing vs. Solitary Viewing

This study's second hypothesis predicted that viewers who binge-watch television alone will experience more guilt than viewers who binge-watch television socially. On the survey, respondents were asked one multiple choice question that identified the typical number of people they binge-watched with. The results were recoded into two groups: viewers who binge-watched alone and viewers who binge-watched with at least one other person. These groups were then examined in relation to the composite guilt variable described above. A two-sample Student's t-test assuming equal variances using a pooled estimate of the variance was performed to test the hypothesis that solitary binge-watching viewers would feel guiltier than social binge-watching viewers.

Content Platform

Survey recipients were asked two series of five-point Likert-type scale questions ranging from "Never" to "Always" and structurally similar to the questions asked for genre and guilt. The first series asked respondents how often they binge-watched various popular platforms, as determined from the literature. The second series of questions used conditional logic to ask respondents how guilty they felt for binge-watching television on the platforms they identified using. Summary statistics specified major trends in guiltiness from the various platforms.

Viewing Medium

For the research question on guilt from binge-watching and medium used, two series of five-point Likert scale questions ranging from “Never” to “Always” were once again utilized. Respondents were asked how often they binge-watched using relevant media. They were also asked how guilty they felt using those media to binge-watch. Summary statistics identified the major guilt tendencies across various media.

Findings

Out of all respondents, approximately 63% were aged 18-24, and the remaining 37% spanned from 25 to over 75. The sample was 68% female, and 30% male. 42% of respondents were full-time college students, and approximately 40% held an Associate’s degree, Bachelor’s degree, or post-graduate degree.

Perceptions of Binge Viewership

The first research question of this study asked:

RQ₁: What do contemporary audiences consider to be binge-watching?

Episode Length. For television episodes 30 minutes in length, 39% of respondents believed that it took four episodes or more for a viewing session to be considered binge-watching, while an additional 35% believed it took five episodes or more. However, for television shows 60 minutes in length, the majority of respondents (52%) agreed that it took only four episodes or more before that viewing session could be considered a binge session. For television shows 120 minutes in length, that number dropped to only two episodes or more, which 49% of respondents agreed was binge-watching.

Type of Television. Respondents also provided input on what types of television can be binge-watched. Though 68% of respondents agreed that sports could not be binge-watched, 21%

felt that watching multiple sports events in a row was technically binge-watching. For some, watching any television program in a row qualified as binge behavior. This included weather channels (41% felt this could be binged), news (25%), award ceremonies (20%), and political events (19%). Most respondents agreed that any television program that qualified as a “TV show” could be binged. For example, 68% of survey takers felt that they could binge-watch food or cooking shows, and 62% thought that home shopping networks could be binge-watched as well.

Respondents were split when asked whether binge-watching could occur if multiple television series were viewed in one sitting. 48% of respondents decided that binge-watching meant enjoying one television series at a time, while 47% felt the opposite, that viewers could watch multiple television series in one sitting and still be binge-watching television.

Amount and Duration

This study’s second research question asked:

RQ₂: What is the relationship between amount/duration of binge-watching and guilty feelings?

This research question was answered through two separate hypotheses, the first of which predicted:

H_{1a}: Respondents who report higher levels of television consumption in the previous week will be more likely to feel guilty for binge-watching than participants who report lower levels of television consumption in the previous week.

Data on viewing behavior was recoded into two groups: those that viewed 1-10 hours of television in the past week ($N = 250$, $M = 2.47$, $SD = 1.01$), and those that viewed 11 or more hours of TV in the past week ($N = 165$, $M = 2.077$, $SD = .99$). A two-sample Student’s t-test

assuming equal variances using a pooled estimate of the variance was performed to test this hypothesis, ($t(413) = 3.86, p < .001$). This study found a significant relationship between amount of television consumed and feelings of guilt (see Table 1). However, this relationship was in the opposite direction of what was predicted by the hypothesis. According to guidelines offered by Cohen (1988), the effect size ($d = .39$) was close to medium.

This study's second hypothesis predicted:

H_{1b}: Respondents who report having longer duration binge-watching sessions will be more likely to feel guilty than participants who report shorter duration binge-watching sessions.

A second independent sample t-test assuming equal variances was conducted using the typical number of hours the viewer watched TV in one sitting. Similar to the first test, levels of the independent variable had to be recoded into two groups: those that watched one to two hours of TV in a typical sitting ($N = 281, M = 2.3227, SD = 1.00$), and those that watched three or more hours of TV in a typical sitting ($N = 102, M = 2.0686, SD = 1.02$). For this test, group one was statistically different from group 2 ($t(381) = 2.18, p < .05$), but effect size was .14 smaller, indicating a moderately smaller relationship than the first t-test ($d = .251$) (see Table 1).

In both tests, respondents within group one felt less guilt for binge-watching than group two: both in the number of hours of TV viewed in the previous week and the number of hours viewed in a typical sitting. Therefore, significance for this relationship was confirmed in the opposite direction of H_{1a} and H_{1b}.

Genre

This study's third research question asked:

RQ₃: Among contemporary audiences, to what extent is the genre of television binge-watched associated with feelings of guilt from binge-watching?

Overall, more respondents binge-watched dramas (91%) and comedies (89%) than any other genre. However, the genre that more respondents felt guilt for binge-watching than any other was teen dramas (70%) (see Table 2.1).

These findings were consistent with the averages of the five-point Likert scales. Mean scores showed that dramas were binge-watched more than any other genre of television show ($M = 3.28$, $SD = 1.09$), followed closely by comedies ($M = 3.20$, $SD = 1.15$).

On average, respondents felt guiltiest binge-watching teen dramas, reaffirming the findings from the behavioral frequency table ($M = 2.28$, $SD = 1.09$).¹ The next highest amount of guilt felt from binge-watching certain genres came from regular dramas ($M = 2.12$, $SD = 1.04$) (see Table 2.2).

Social Viewing vs. Solitary Viewing

This study's fourth research question asked:

RQ₄: How is the social context (social viewing vs. solitary viewing) of binge-watching related to feelings of guilt?

To answer this question, a third hypothesis predicted:

H₃: Viewers who binge-watch television alone will experience more guilt than viewers who binge-watch television socially.

¹ After teen dramas, respondents felt the most guilt on average for bingeing "Other" genres ($M = 2.15$, $SD = 1.13$). The most common text entries for "Other" genres included reality shows, food/cooking shows, and legal/crime dramas.

The majority of respondents (53%) reported binge-watching television alone most often. Of the 47% that did binge-watch with others, 83% did so with their romantic partners, and 71% preferred to binge-watch with their friends. For those who binge-watched with other people, the largest percentage of participants felt guilty when they were with their parents (68%). Approximately half of all respondents felt guilty binge-watching with their friends (49%) or romantic partners (48%) (see Table 2.1).

Respondents socially binge-watched the most with romantic partners ($M = 3.45$, $SD = 1.33$) and friends ($M = 2.64$, $SD = 1.28$). Also, parents remained the source of the most amount of guilt from social binge-watching, according to the Likert-scale means (see Table 3.1).

To test H_2 , this study conducted a two-sample t-test using a recoded independent variable with two levels: viewers who binge-watched alone ($N = 234$, $M = 2.37$, $SD = 1.01$), and viewers who binge-watched with at least one other person ($N = 207$, $M = 2.26$, $SD = 1.07$). There was no significant difference between viewers who binge-watched alone and viewers who binge-watched with others ($t(439) = 1.07$, $p = .285$). Therefore, H_2 was not supported (see Table 3.2).

Content Platform

This study's fifth research question asked:

RQ₅: Among contemporary audiences, to what extent is the content platform used for binge-watching television associated with guilt from binge-watching?

Nine-tenths of all respondents reported binge-watching using streaming services (90%), which was by far the most used platform. The next most popular platform, cable networks, were used by only 56% of participants to binge-watch. The platform that the least participants used to binge-watch was BitTorrent (25%). The frequency distribution for guilt from binge-watching

was relatively uniform across all platforms, ranging 11% from VOD (54%) to broadcast networks (65%) (see Table 2.1).

Though cable was the second most common platform, DVR had the second highest average for binge viewership ($M = 2.17$, $SD = 1.29$). In the statistical analysis of platform and guilt, respondents who used streaming services to binge-watch television felt the guiltiest afterwards ($M = 2.13$, $SD = 1.08$). However, respondents who used DVRs to binge-watch television felt the least amount of guilt for their actions ($M = 1.80$, $SD = .86$). The similarity of the standard deviations for each platform provided insight to the uniformity of the findings; the standard deviation of each platform ranged from .86 – 1.08, a relatively small dispersion (see Table 4.1).

Viewing Medium

This study's sixth research question asked:

RQ₆: Among contemporary audiences, to what extent is the viewing medium used for binge-watching television associated with guilt from binge-watching?

Two media stood out as commonly used by respondents for binge-watching television: television screens (93%) and laptops (81%). The three remaining media in this study paled in terms of frequency of usage: tablets (38%), phones (35%), and desktop monitors (30%). Like content platforms, guilt from binge-watching was relatively uniform across all five viewing media, ranging from 51% on a desktop monitor to 63% using a laptop (see Table 2.1).

Descriptive statistical analysis of medium and binge viewership returned TV screens as the most often used device to binge-watch ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 1.19$), with laptops close behind ($M = 3.15$, $SD = 1.35$): just as the frequency table showed. Overall, guilt levels were low for all five

media, and varied very little between each medium. Standard deviation was consistently similar for each (see Table 5.1).

Discussion

Defining Binge Viewership

Reflecting the opinions of journalist Nolan Feeney (2014), this study found that instead of defining binge-watching by the number of episodes, respondents felt that the length of the viewing session itself was the defining trait of binge viewership. According to respondents, the average number of TV episodes required for binge-watching to occur during a viewing session decreased as the TV show episodes became longer. However, the time equivalents of these amounts were approximately equal, averaging between 2-3 hours depending on the length of television show in question. One female college student acknowledged this important benchmark, saying: “When I watch multiple episodes, it's usually a program that is shorter (20-30 minutes) because watching three [episodes] in a row only amounts to about one hour. If [the binge-watching session] is less than two hours I usually don't mind, but there have been some days I have wasted hours on a single show and I regret not doing something more productive with my time.” Though most industry analysts (Netflix, 2013; TiVo, 2015a) have centralized binge viewership on the number of episodes watched, this study has identified that another important factor to consider is the amount of time spent watching television in one sitting.

The television programs that viewers believed could be binge-watched was also identified. Though most viewers agreed that sporting events could not be binged, 21% believed that watching multiple televised sports games in a row was equivalent to watching multiple TV show episodes. One male college student expressed this opinion when he said, “Usually when I watch multiple television programs in a row it is when I am watching sports... I enjoy watching

sports so I feel fine watching multiple games in a row.” For unique programs like award ceremonies, the majority of respondents felt that they could not be binge-watched. Similarly, most respondents felt that informative programs such as news and weather broadcasts did not have the necessary characteristics to be binged either, potentially due to the nature or structure of their content.

One element of the behavior that was hotly contested by respondents was whether or not the same television series had to be viewed during a session in order for that to be considered binge-watching. 48% of all respondents agreed that binge-watching required the viewer to watch only one television series in a sitting. One person provided insight into this opinion when they wrote, “I tend to only watch through one series at a time, so if I'd like to watch another series I need to finish the one I'm watching first.” For viewers that focus on one television show in its entirety before moving on, it's only logical that binge-watching requires a focus on one television series. In fact, when asked whether they watch one television series completely before moving onto a new series, over 73% of respondents answered that they did at some level. That being said, 47% of respondents still felt that viewers could watch multiple television series in one sitting and be bingeing TV. This disagreement on whether binge viewership requires a focus on one series at a time suggests that binge-watching can be very different for people depending on their perception of viewing tendencies.

Amount and Duration

When observing the amount of guilt respondents felt for binge-watching television, findings were contradictory to initial expectation. As noted above, an independent sample t-test indicated that light viewers who watched 1-10 hours of television in the past week felt significantly guiltier for doing so than heavy viewers who viewed over 10 hours of television in

the past week (see Table 1). Relatedly, an independent sample T-Test on typical hours spent watching television in a row confirmed these findings, and showed that short duration individuals who watched one to two hours of television at a time tended to feel guiltier than long duration viewers who watched two or more hours of television at a time.

These findings are contradictory to the hypothesis that the more hours a viewer spent watching television, the guiltier they'd feel afterwards. However, there is a potential explanation for this. For viewers who watch less television, binge-watching might represent a disruption of their usual behavior. Another possibility could be that viewers who spend less time in front of a television and find themselves binge-watching shows have experienced what *The New York Times* journalist James Poniewozik (2015) calls "The Suck," or "that narcotic, tidal feeling of getting drawn into a show and letting it wash over you for hours." This lapse in judgment coincides with a lack of intentionality on behalf of the viewer. As one female college student explained, "When I watch multiple episodes in a row I usually start with the intention of doing so. I do it to relax and to be a long activity to occupy time or to put off doing something else." The importance of intentionality was mentioned in one study on binge-watching performed by MarketCast (2013), where 71% of respondents identified that their bingeing sessions were usually unintentional, and that this "unplanned shift from casual watching to bingeing has some unintended and uncomfortable consequences for Bingers." When the intentionality to binge-watch is absent, as is likely for viewers that only spend one to two hours watching TV per sitting, then guilt can become more prevalent.

Genre

The two most frequently binge-watched genres were comedies and dramas. This partially confirms the study performed by TiVo (2014) that identified dramas and crime dramas as the

two most frequently binge-watched genres. However, TiVo failed to identify comedy as an even more significant genre for bingeing, as it was shown in this study. One female respondent addressed her motivations for binge-watching comedies when she said, “I like comedy because I can leave it playing episode after episode while I do other things and still follow the story.” The tendency for comedic shows to have simple story arcs allowed this respondent to multitask while binge-watching. Multitasking was cited often in the open-ended text responses as a reason for binge-watching, and will be discussed later on.

In his article on streaming services and genres, Poniewozik (2015) noted that both comedies and dramas have succeeded on streaming services as popular genres of television. However, for binge-watching overall, it was teen dramas and dramas that held the highest guilt averages. Contributor Audrey Fox (2014) shed light on the potential reasons viewers felt guilty for binge-watching teen dramas when she described them as “objectively not very good television.” To Fox, teen dramas were often “needlessly soapy,” “sanctimonious,” or “trying way too hard to be hip.” The way that many teen dramas exacerbate typical teenage situations could leave a viewer feeling guilty after a binge-watching session. In fact, almost 52% of respondents that admitted feeling guilty for binge-watching teen dramas agreed that at least part of their guilt derived from enjoying content that was not held in high regard.

Meanwhile, respondents identified dramas as both one of the most binge-watched genres of TV and one of the most guilt-inducing genres. One female respondent explained why this might be the case. To her, “Dramas, scifi, and thrillers are more suspenseful and typically have good cliffhangers at the end of each episode. These cliffhangers usually cause me to go against my better judgment, watching yet another episode.” The structure of dramatic TV shows has evolved to tempt viewers into longer viewer sessions by constantly teasing more plot

developments. Sims (2015) describes the most popular form of cliffhangers today as “the cliffhanger that promises more great storytelling to come,” citing *House of Cards* as an example. Many dramas use this plot device as a means to encourage continued viewership, which can potentially lead to feelings of guilt later on.

Social Viewing vs. Solitary Viewing

This study’s findings on social preferences and binge-watching contradicted the Harris Interactive Survey performed by Netflix (2013), suggesting that in fact, viewers tend to binge-watch television alone. However, the Harris Interactive Survey identified that viewers who do wait to watch their favorite shows will do so until “the person they want to watch with is available,” emphasizing the social aspects of binge viewership. This coincides with findings from this study, which showed viewers who enjoy binge-watching with others strongly preferring to watch with romantic partners and friends over any others.

The high percentage of respondents that felt some amount of guilt when binge-watching with parents and the noticeably large average for guiltiness from binge-watching with parents demonstrated that in *some* social contexts, guiltiness can result from binge-watching television. In the case for binge viewership, part of the explanation for why participants felt guiltier watching with their parents could be because of the opportunity costs that accompany such viewing sessions. As one young adult female respondent described it, “I binge-watch [television shows] if I am trying to avoid doing my work... and don’t feel like being productive.” Naturally, any activity that causes kids to not get their work done, especially when performed with or in front of their parents, can instigate some amount of guilt.

There seemed to be no significant difference between those who preferred to binge-watch alone and those who binge-watched with others. One reason for this lack of disparity could be

the viewer's motivation for bingeing; if the viewer has strong reasons to binge-watch alone, then it could be possible that they wouldn't feel any guiltier than one who binge-watched with friends or others. One respondent who reported high levels of binge-watching alone said: "Because I don't do it often, and because I rarely get to control the TV, I consider the opportunity to binge-watch something of a luxury - a kind of sweet guilty pleasure - and I revel in it and drink wine and eat ice cream." To her, having the opportunity to binge-watch television alone was a rare opportunity which she took personal enjoyment in, even if there was a slight sense of guiltiness in her actions. However, as there was no significant relationship between social context of binge viewership and guilt, further analysis will be required to prove that binge-watching television alone has serious effects on the amount of guilt experienced by the viewer.

Content Platform

The increasing popularity of streaming services like Netflix and Hulu was reflected in the 91% of respondents who preferred to binge-watch television through this platform more than any other. Their strong preference can be partially explained by the textual responses in the survey. To some respondents, the difference lay in how television shows are often released on streaming services all at once. One female survey taker affirmed this by writing, "I almost always binge-watch the Netflix original shows since they come out all at once, not one episode at a time." Having all episodes of a show openly available to viewers increased their opportunities for binge viewership. Plus, features like "Post Play" on Netflix have removed the choice of whether to continue watching a TV show or not. One respondent articulated, "I will binge-watch a series when it becomes available on Netflix because Netflix automatically plays the next episode and once you start an episode, I find it hard to turn it off." Due to the success of this

feature in enabling binge viewing behaviors, the majority of streaming services now offer some kind of auto-play feature, including Netflix, Hulu, Amazon Prime, and even YouTube.

Though only 63% of respondents reported feeling guilty from binge-watching television through streaming services, the 2.18 average between “Rarely (2)” and “Sometimes (3)” for respondent guiltiness helped clarify the severity of guilt that some viewers felt. For those viewers, the auto-play features of many streaming services could contribute to a lack of intentionality that accompanies streaming service binge-watching. In the survey performed by Feeney (2014), one coworker expressed his dissent for the “Post Play” feature when he said, “If [the TV show] will keep playing, I’ll probably keep watching until it asks me to make a decision. You know, the ‘Are you still watching?’ prompt that appears after a while. It’s Netflix shaming. After that, I shut it down and try to not think about how my TV just judged me.” Similar to how a lack of intentionality can affect the guiltiness of the viewer, the presence of intentionality can have the opposite effect. This might explain why on average, respondents who binge-watched television through their DVRs felt the least amount of guilt afterwards. The total control over viewership that DVRs allow may force viewers to be more proactive about how much television they watch in one sitting. One male respondent confirmed this when he wrote, “I feel watching multiple episodes in a row on a device that allows you to control content flow on demand, such as a DVR or subscription service, is the most efficient way of watching TV... Not only can I speed through commercials, introductions, and recap portions of the episode but I can also minimize the stuff that usually happens before watching TV (powering up/logging into the device/system, arguing about spots on the couch etc.).” The amount of control that a DVR provides the viewer has a noticeable effect on the amount of guiltiness felt from binge-watching

television. This makes sense: the more control that is placed in the viewer's hands, the more intentional their viewing session will be, and the less guilt will likely result from that session.

Viewing Medium

The findings for medium and binge television viewership aligned with the *Nielsen Q3 Total Audience Report* (2015), in that television screens were the most often used medium for respondents to binge-watch TV. However, the PBS poll from Goodavage (2013) that identified the significance of laptops also carried some accuracy, since laptops were nearly as popular for binge-watching as TV screens were. In fact, 443 respondents out of the 476 that answered the survey question reported binge-watching on a TV screen to some extent, whereas 374 respondents reported using a laptop to do the same. Comparatively, phones, tablets, and desktops were used extremely little. All three media had less than 39% of respondents who reported using them to binge-watch television. This could indicate that viewers prefer to use larger screens, whether from televisions or laptops, to binge-watch TV shows.

The similar amounts of guilt from binge-watching television on various media told a different story. Contradictory to some of the findings from platform, genre, and social context, respondents indicated that medium has very little effect on the guiltiness felt by the viewer. This might be because the medium used to watch television relies largely on a variety of other factors, many of which have been explored in this study. The number of people present, the show that is on at the time, or the platform through which the show is playing can all have an effect on how the show will be watched, and which viewing medium will be used. Based on results from this study, it appears unlikely that the medium has any significant effect on the amount of guilt felt by a binge-watching television viewer.

Insight from Open-Ended Responses

Open-ended responses focusing on why viewers binge-watched television revealed many possible motivations that had not been considered. One popular explanation for why viewers watched several television episodes in a row was because they were busy with other activities, and having the TV on in the background served as a welcome companion. One respondent likened television to “background noise,” while another respondent preferred to have television playing while she was “cooking, cleaning house, or working on more mindless tasks.” Television multitasking isn’t revolutionary by any means; in one TiVo (2015b) survey, 99 percent of the 806 respondents admitted to multitasking while watching television, and 53 percent admitted to multitasking every single time they watched TV. For some, the only way they can binge-watch is by finding shows that are not overly compelling, as this respondent identified: “I usually have the TV on while doing other things (e.g., cooking, cleaning). I usually only binge-watch with things I don’t get very invested in, just so that I have something going on in the background.” By watching shows that are easy to digest, viewers can focus on other tasks at hand, and often the result can be a longer binge viewing session.

Other respondents preferred to binge-watch for a nearly opposite reason. To them, the television content was so important that the major incentive for longer television viewing sessions was to avoid spoilers. In his discussion about the transformation of genres, Sims (2015) articulated the difficulty viewers can have avoiding television spoilers. With modern technology, it is as simple as a “push notification on your phone” that can ruin whatever show the viewer is watching. This has caused many individuals to try and stay as caught up with television as possible. As one respondent explained, “I usually watch multiple episodes in a row to ‘catch up’ with my peers, especially if they’ll be talking about it in social situations. I don’t want any

spoilers when I see them next!” Similarly, the value of being able to talk to others about a certain show caused some respondents to keep binge-watching. One survey taker described his motivations as a desire to “boost” his “social currency.” By staying caught up with certain television and pop culture content, some respondents felt more prepared for social interactions.

One final tendency from respondents was to binge-watch television as a means to escape whatever obligations they had, or simply to allow themselves a mental reprieve. Such was the case for one respondent, who wanted to “think about someone else’s problems and escape into a different world for a few hours, to turn my mind off and let the story take control.” One of the most effective ways to “turn off” one’s mind is to get lost in a television show. To this end, binge-watching might be the ultimate television escape, providing viewers with hours of distraction. Based on textual responses, binge viewing behaviors can be founded from vastly different motives. But between background noise, avoiding spoilers, social currency, and total escape, it’s clear that the behavior itself can serve a variety of different purposes.

Conclusion

This study aimed to determine the relationship between guilt and major factors of television binge-watching. In doing so, perceptions, motivations, and binge viewing tendencies were observed and analyzed. By identifying these major factors of binge-watching and comparing guilt levels within those factors, it was possible to understand what aspects of binge viewership cause changes in viewer guilt.

Contrary to existing literature and mainstream perceptions of binge-watching, this study found that viewers considered the amount of time spent watching television to be more important than the number of episodes viewed in a row. Also, how long a viewer typically watched TV significantly altered the amount of guilt they felt after binge-watching. Some respondent textual

insight suggested that a lack of intentionality might cause less avid viewers to feel guiltier after binge-watching, though this is just one possible explanation.

Guilt manifested itself strongly in a variety of circumstances. When observing genre, this study determined that comedies and dramas were the preferred shows to binge, while teen dramas caused the highest levels of guilt. Television screens were the most often used for bingeing, though laptops were nearly as popular. However, respondents felt little difference in guilt from using either to binge-watch television. The majority of viewers preferred to binge-watch television alone, while those that enjoyed company did so with romantic partners and friends most often. A lack of significant difference between guilt from binge-watching alone vs. with others indicated that other factors of the viewing session were potentially more important. One such factor was platform, in which streaming services were the most popular for binge-watching, followed closely by DVRs. However, the viewers who used DVRs felt the least amount of guilt for bingeing television, while those that used streaming services felt the guiltiest after. When given the opportunity to elaborate on their behaviors, multitasking, avoiding spoilers, social currency and escapism were frequently cited as motivations for binge-watching. In each case, viewers used longer television viewing sessions as a means to accomplish some goal, whether that was having background noise while working, preparing for the next get-together with friends, or avoiding obligations.

Though a variety of elements in binge viewership were brought to light through this study, many questions remain. Further research could determine more direct, correlational relationships between various aspects of the behavior, such as whether an increase in hours of television in one binge viewing session causes increased guiltiness by the viewer. Also, the social context of the viewing session remains as an opportunity for researchers to better

understand why people choose to binge-watch by themselves or with others, and how they feel about doing so. Though motivations for binge-watching were explored at large, there is still opportunity to learn why viewers choose certain television options over others when they binge-watch.

Works Cited

- Binge-watch [Def. 1] (2013). In *Oxford Dictionary Online*. Retrieved January 15, 2015, from http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/binge-watch
- Bonnington, C. (2015, February 10). In less than two years, a smartphone could be your only computer. *Wired*. Retrieved from <http://www.wired.com/2015/02/smartphone-only-computer/>
- Bourdaa, M., & Hong-Mercier, S.-K. (2012). Creating, sharing, interacting: Fandom in the age of digital convergence and globalized television. In H. Bilandzic, G. Patriarche & P. J. Traudt (Eds.), *The social use of media: Cultural and social scientific perspectives on audience research* (pp. 241–255). Bristol, UK: Intellect.
- Bower, R. T. (1985). *The changing television audience in America*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Company Profile (2015). *Netflix Inc.* Retrieved from <http://ir.netflix.com/>
- Comstock, G. A., & Scharrer, E. (1999). *Television: What's on, who's watching, and what it means*. San Diego: Academic Press.
- Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences*. Hillsdale, NJ: L. Erlbaum Associates.
- Cruz, L. (2014, November 27). Americans have always felt guilty about TV watching. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from <http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2014/11/americans-have-always-felt-guilty-about-tv-watching/383152/>
- Evangelista, B. (2015, September 16). Pay TV cord cutting accelerates as Netflix, Hulu rise, study says. *San Francisco Chronicle*. Retrieved from <http://www.sfchronicle.com/business/article/Pay-TV-cord-cutting-accelerates-as-Netflix-Hulu-6509739.php>
- Feeney, F. (2014, February 18). When, exactly, does watching a lot of Netflix become a ‘binge’? *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from <http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2014/02/when-exactly-does-watching-a-lot-of-netflix-become-a-binge/283844/>
- Fox, A. (2014, September 2). 10 teen dramas that are actually good television shows. *WhatCulture*. Retrieved from <http://whatculture.com/tv/10-teen-dramas-actually-good-television-shows?page=1>

- Goldstein, J. (2013, June 6). Television binge-watching: If it sounds so bad why does it feel so good? *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/television-binge-watching-if-it-sounds-so-bad-why-does-it-feel-so-good/2013/06/06/fd658ec0-c198-11e2-ab60-67bba7be7813_story.html
- Goodavage, M. (2013, January 4). Poll: Nearly half of people watch “TV” on devices other than TVs. *PBS Independent Lens*. Retrieved from <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/blog/poll-nearly-half-of-people-watch-tv-on-something-other-than-tvs/>
- Goodman, B. (Director). (2001). *Frontline: Merchants of cool* [Motion picture]. PBS Home Video
- Griffee, S. (2013, February 13). Netflix, ‘binge-watching’ shift TV viewing habits. *USA Today*. Retrieved from <http://college.usatoday.com/2013/02/13/netflix-binge-watching-shift-tv-viewing-habits/>
- Herrera, G. (2014, December). Binge watching causes distraction among students. *Palo Alto Pulse*. Retrieved from <https://pacpulse.com/2014/12/04/binge-watching-causes-distraction-among-students/>
- Hofmann, W., Vohs, K., & Baumeister, R. (2012). What people desire, feel conflicted about, and try to resist in everyday life. *Psychological Science*, 23(6), 582-588.
- Hsu, M. (2014, September 26). How to overcome a binge-watching addiction. *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from <http://www.wsj.com/articles/how-to-overcome-a-binge-watching-addiction-1411748602>
- Hulu. (2015, April 29). The Hulu drumbeat continues at the 2015 upfront presentation. *Hulu Blog*. Retrieved from <http://blog.hulu.com/2015/04/29/2015-hulu-upfront-presentation/>
- Jesdanun, A. (2014, September 2). The case against binge-watching TV. *The Salt Lake Tribune*. Retrieved from <http://archive.sltrib.com/story.php?ref=/sltrib/entertainment2/58352656-223/watching-episodes-binge-watched.html.csp>
- Kackman, M., Binfield, M., Payne, M. T., Perlman, A., & Sebok, B. (2011). Introduction. In M. Kackman, M. Binfield, M. T. Payne, A. Perlman & B. Sebok (Eds.), *Flow TV: Television in the age of media convergence* (pp. 1–10). New York: Routledge.
- Kastrenakes, J. (2015, April 29). Hulu hits 9 million subscribers as TV and mobile viewing takes off. *The Verge*. Retrieved from <http://www.theverge.com/2015/4/29/8513147/hulu-9-million-subscribers>
- Leubsdorf, B. (2015, June 24). We're working more hours-and watching more TV. *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from <http://www.wsj.com/articles/were-working-more-hours-and-watching-more-tv-1435187603>

- Leech, N. L., Barrett, K. C., & Morgan, G. A. (2005). *SPSS for intermediate statistics: Use and interpretation*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc: Hillsdale, New Jersey.
- Linville, T. (2013, March 3). Sites like Netflix often lead to binge-watching of TV programs. *The Crimson White*. Retrieved from <http://www.cw.ua.edu/article/2013/03/sites-like-netflix-often-lead-to-binge-watching-of-tv-programs>
- Lotz, A. D. (2007). *The television will be revolutionized*. New York: New York University Press.
- Lotz, A. D. (2009). What is U.S. television now? In E. Katz & P. Scannell (Eds.), *The annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (Vol. 625, pp. 49–59). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Luckerson, V. (2014, December 3). Here's proof television is slowly dying. *TIME Business*. Retrieved from <http://time.com/3615387/tv-viewership-declining-nielsen/>
- Lull, J. (1990). *Inside family viewing*. London: Comedia.
- Matrix, S. (2014). The Netflix effect: Teens, binge-watching, and on-demand digital media trends. *Jeunesse: Young People, Texts, Cultures*, 6(1), 119-138.
- MarketCast. (2013, March 8). MarketCast study finds TV “binge-viewing” creates a more engaged viewer for future seasons and not a bingeing habit. *PRWeb*. Retrieved from <http://www.prweb.com/releases/2013/3/prweb10513066.htm>
- Millennials in Canada binge-watch TV more than older generations. (2016, February 24). *eMarketer*. Retrieved from <http://www.emarketer.com/Article/Millennials-Canada-Binge-Watch-TV-More-Than-Older-Generations/1013626>
- Mittell, J. (2004). *Genre and television: From cop shows to cartoons in American culture*. New York: Routledge.
- Nelson, R. (2013, May 9). Young Americans won't pay for TV. Will they ever? *TIME Business*. Retrieved from <http://business.time.com/2013/05/09/young-americans-wont-pay-for-tv-will-they-ever/>
- Netflix. (2013). Netflix declares binge-watching is the new normal: Study finds 73% of TV streamers feel good about it [Press release]. Retrieved from <https://pr.netflix.com/WebClient/getNewsSummary.do?newsId=496>
- Nielsen. (2015). The Total Audience Report Q3 2015. *The Nielsen Company*. Retrieved from <http://www.nielsen.com/content/dam/corporate/us/en/reports-downloads/2015-reports/total-audience-report-q3-2015.pdf>
- Panek, E. (2014). Left to their own devices: College students “guilty pleasure” media use and time management. *Communication Research*. 41(4), 561-577.

- Poniewozik, J. (2015, December 16). Streaming TV isn't just a new way to watch. It's a new genre. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/20/arts/television/streaming-tv-isnt-just-a-new-way-to-watch-its-a-new-genre.html>
- PriceWaterhouseCoopers. (2014). *Feeling the effects of the videoquake: Changes in how we consume video content*. Retrieved from <https://consumermediallc.files.wordpress.com/2014/12/pwc-videoquake-video-content-consumption-report.pdf>.
- Reinecke, L, Hartmann, T., & Eden, A. (2014). The guilty couch potato: The role of ego depletion in reducing recovery through media use. *Journal of Communication*, 64(4), 569-589.
- Sims, D. (2015, March 20). From Dallas to spoiler alerts, the rise and fall of the cliffhanger. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from <http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2015/03/the-decline-of-the-cliffhanger/388255/>
- Smith, A. (2015, April 1). U.S. smartphone use in 2015. *Pew Research Center*. Retrieved from <http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/04/01/us-smartphone-use-in-2015/>
- Smith, C. (2014, January 16). The Netflix effect: How binge-watching is changing television. *TechRadar*. Retrieved from <http://www.techradar.com/us/news/internet/the-netflix-effect-how-binge-watching-is-changing-television-1215808>
- Smith, S. M., & Krugman, D. M. (2010). Exploring perceptions and usage patterns of digital video recorder owners. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 54(2), 248-264.
- Snider, M. (2015, December 16). Cutting the cord: More Millennials have streaming service than pay-TV. *USA Today*. Retrieved from <http://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/2015/12/16/cutting-cord-more-millennials-have-streaming-service-than-pay-tv/76914922/>
- Steel, E., & Marsh, B. (2015, October 3). Millennials and cutting the cord. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/10/03/business/media/changing-media-consumption-millennials-cord-cutters.html>
- Stone, C. (2016, February 4). How unhealthy is binge watching? Press pause, and read on. *Reader's Digest*. Retrieved from <http://www.rd.com/culture/binge-watching-unhealthy/>
- Sung, Y. H., Kang, E. Y., & Lee, W (2015). "My name is... And I'm a binge viewer": An exploratory study of motivations for binge watching behavior. American Academy of Advertising. Conference. Proceedings (Online): 169.

- Tablet users to surpass 1 billion worldwide in 2015. (2015, January 8). *eMarketer*. Retrieved from <http://www.emarketer.com/Article/Tablet-Users-Surpass-1-Billion-Worldwide-2015/1011806>
- TiVo. (2015a, June 30). Original streamed series top binge viewing survey for first time [Press release]. Retrieved from <http://pr.tivo.com/manual-releases/2015/Original-Streamed-Series-Top-Binge-Viewing-Survey>
- TiVo. (2015b, November 5). Distracted, but still watching: TiVo survey finds 99 percent of viewers are multitasking while watching TV [Press release]. Retrieved from <http://pr.tivo.com/press-releases/distracted-but-still-watching-tivo-survey-finds-99-percent-of-viewers-are-multi-nasdaq-tivo-1226927>
- TiVo. (2014, January 7). TiVo subscribers tend to binge; Breaking Bad is the most commonly binge-watched show [Press release]. Retrieved from <http://investor.tivo.com/phoenix.zhtml?c=106292&p=irol-newsArticle&ID=1888632&highlight=>
- The Best TV Shows to Binge Watch. (2015). *Ranker*. Retrieved from <http://www.ranker.com/list/best-tv-shows-to-binge-watch/ranker-tv>
- Video-on-demand [Def. 1] (n.d.). In *Oxford Dictionary Online*. Retrieved from http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/video-on-demand
- Willens, M. (2013, May 2). Face it: Binge-viewing is the new date night. *The Huffington Post*. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michele-willens/binge-watching-downton-abbey-breaking-bad-house-of-cards_b_2764830.html

Table 1. How are viewing amounts and viewing durations related to guilty feelings?

	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>p</i>
AMOUNT							
Light viewers	250	2.47	1.01				
Heavy viewers	165	2.08	0.99	3.86	413	0.39	< 0.001
DURATION							
Short duration	281	2.32	1.00	2.18	381	0.25	< 0.05
Long duration	102	2.07	1.02				

Table 2.1. Respondent Binge-Watching Behaviors

Level	% of Respondents Who Binge-Watch	% of Respondents Who Feel Guilty for Binge-Watching
Genre (N = 530)		
Drama	91%	64%
Comedy	89%	64%
Comedy-Drama	77%	64%
Fantasy/SciFi	67%	63%
Animation/Anime	55%	61%
Horror/Thriller	54%	56%
Teen Drama	49%	70%
Social Context (N =223)		
Romantic Partner	83%	48%
Friends	71%	49%
Parents	57%	68%
Siblings	49%	51%
Children	26%	44%
Grandparents	7%	30%
Grandchildren	3%	30%
Content Platform (N =530)		
Streaming Services	90%	63%
Cable	56%	64%
DVR	53%	55%
VOD	47%	54%
DVDs	45%	55%
Broadcast	41%	65%
BitTorrent	25%	56%
Viewing Medium (N = 530)		
TV Screen	93%	62%
Laptop	81%	63%
Tablet	39%	60%
Phone	35%	60%
Desktop Monitor	31%	51%

Table 2.2. Genre Descriptive Statistics

Average Amount of Respondent Binge-Watching				Average Amount of Respondent Guilt from Binge-Watching			
Variable	n Valid	Mean	SD	Variable	n Valid	Mean	SD
Drama	464	3.28	1.09	Teen Drama Guilt	209	2.28	1.09
Comedy	465	3.20	1.15	Drama Guilt	403	2.12	1.04
Comedy-Drama	462	2.75	1.25	Comedy Guilt	389	2.07	1.02
Fantasy/SciFi	462	2.52	1.30	Fantasy/SciFi Guilt	292	2.04	1.00
Horror/Thriller	463	2.16	1.28	Comedy-Drama Guilt	334	2.02	0.96
Animation/Anime	463	2.13	1.25	Animation/Anime Guilt	241	2.01	1.02
Teen Drama	462	2.01	1.25	Horror/Thriller Guilt	238	1.92	0.98

Table 3.1. Social Context Descriptive Statistics

Average Amount of Respondent Binge-Watching				Average Amount of Respondent Guilt from Binge-Watching			
Variable	n Valid	Mean	SD	Variable	n Valid	Mean	SD
Romantic Partner	212	3.45	1.33	Parents Guilt	120	2.58	1.48
Friends	198	2.64	1.28	Children Guilt	61	1.84	1.14
Parents	195	2.01	1.07	Siblings Guilt	103	1.73	0.89
Siblings	199	1.87	1.04	Friends Guilt	150	1.69	0.85
Children	198	1.52	0.96	Romantic Partner Guilt	170	1.64	0.79
Grandchildren	192	1.40	0.24	Grandchildren Guilt	20	1.45	0.76
Grandparents	194	1.11	0.45	Grandparents Guilt	30	1.43	0.73

Table 3.2. How is the social context of binge-watching related to guilty feelings?

	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>p</i>
People who watch alone	234	2.37	1.01	.886	432	0.09	> 0.05
People who watch with others	200	2.28	1.07				

Table 4.1. Platform Descriptive Statistics

Average Amount of Respondent Binge-Watching				Average Amount of Respondent Guilt from Binge-Watching			
Variable	n Valid	Mean	SD	Variable	n Valid	Mean	SD
Streaming Services	469	3.81	1.23	Streaming Services Guilt	393	2.13	1.08
DVR	470	2.17	1.29	Broadcast Guilt	185	2.09	1.00
Cable	474	2.00	1.10	Cable Guilt	244	2.08	1.01
VOD	470	1.90	1.10	VOD Guilt	205	1.89	1.01
DVD	468	1.69	0.92	DVD Guilt	202	1.87	0.96
Broadcast	466	1.61	0.83	BitTorrent Guilt	112	1.87	0.92
BitTorrent	469	1.46	0.92	DVR Guilt	229	1.80	0.86

Table 5.1. Medium Descriptive Statistics

Average Amount of Respondent Binge-Watching				Average Amount of Respondent Guilt from Binge-Watching			
Variable	n Valid	Mean	SD	Variable	n Valid	Mean	SD
TV Screen	476	3.49	1.19	Laptop Guilt	348	2.15	1.11
Laptop	463	3.15	1.35	Phone Guilt	161	2.12	1.13
Tablet	461	1.76	1.11	TV Screen Guilt	407	2.08	1.04
Phone	459	1.61	0.96	Tablet Guilt	178	2.04	1.04
Desktop Monitor	459	1.54	0.95	Desktop Monitor Guilt	138	1.86	1.03

Appendix 1

The Wagner Viewing Behaviors Questionnaire

This survey asks questions about the ways that you view television. This study is being carried out by Charlie Wagner for his honors thesis in the Department of Communication at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas. Charlie is undertaking this project in order to understand contemporary television viewing behaviors.

You must be at least 18 years old in order to participate in this project. Participation in this survey is completely optional, and you may exit this survey at any time. If you are interested in reading the thesis that emerges from this survey, you can leave your e-mail address and we will send you a digital copy of the thesis after it is published. Survey results are not being used for marketing purposes, and your answers will remain confidential.

The research is supervised by Dr. Jennifer Henderson (Professor and Chair, Department of Communication), Dr. Aaron Delwiche (Professor, Department of Communication), and Dr. Robert Huesca (Professor, Department of Communication). This project has also been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Trinity University. Questions about this study should be directed to the faculty advisors via email: jhender4@trinity.edu or adelwich@trinity.edu.

Thank you very much for taking the time to share your thoughts about contemporary television viewing.

Demographic Information

1. Are you currently 18 or older?

- Yes
- No

2. What is your age?

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74
- 75+

3. Which gender do you currently identify with?
- Male
 - Female
 - Transgender
 - Androgynous
 - Other (please specify) _____
 - Decline to state

4. What is the highest level of education that you have completed?
- Middle school
 - High school
 - GED
 - Some college (no degree)
 - Associate's degree
 - Bachelor's degree
 - Post-graduate degree
 - Decline to state

5. Are you currently a full-time college student?
- Yes
 - No

Thank you for offering to complete this survey. Unfortunately, the survey is limited to participants 18 years of age or older. We appreciate your understanding!

Frequency of Viewership

6. Approximately how many hours of television did you watch last week?
- 0
 - 1-10
 - 11-20
 - 21-30
 - 31-40
 - 41-50
 - >50

7. How many hours of television do you typically watch in one sitting?
- Less than 1
 - 1-2
 - 3-4
 - 5-6
 - 7 or more

Perceptions of Binge-Watching

In recent years, discussion has grown on "binge television viewing." We are interested in knowing more about how you personally define this term. Some television programs are 30

minutes or less. Other programs last 45 to 60 minutes, depending on commercials, and some can be as long as two hours each. The next series of questions asks you to consider binge-watching in different contexts, including television episodes, movies, and short online videos.

8. In your opinion, how many consecutive TV episodes of the following lengths qualify as binge-watching?

	2 episodes or more	3 episodes or more	4 episodes or more	5 episodes or more	None of these qualify	No opinion
15-30 minutes in length	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
45-60 minutes in length	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
90-120 minutes in length	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. In your opinion, how many consecutive full length movies qualify as binge-watching?

- 2 or more
- 3 or more
- 4 or more
- 5 or more
- None of the above qualify
- No opinion

10. In your opinion, how many consecutive YouTube (or similar) videos of 10 minutes or less qualify as binge-watching?

- 2 or more
- 3 or more
- 4 or more
- 5 or more
- None of the above qualify
- No opinion

11. In your opinion, for binge-watching to occur, do all of the TV episodes watched need to be of the same television series?

- Yes
- No
- No opinion

12. In your opinion, which of the following qualifies as "binge-watching?"

	Not binge-watching	Binge-watching	No opinion
Watching two or more sporting events in a row	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Watching the news for two or more hours in a row	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Watching award ceremonies for two or more hours in a row	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Watching food/cooking shows for two or more hours in a row	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Watching weather shows for two or more hours in a row	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Watching political events for two or more hours in a row	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Watching home shopping channels for two or more hours in a row	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Television Viewing Behaviors

13. When I watch TV...

	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
I watch an episode each week after the newest episode airs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I watch a television series only after the full season has ended.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I watch a television series completely in one sitting from start to finish.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I watch only one episode of a television series in one sitting.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I watch multiple episodes of a television series in one sitting.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I watch one television series at a time before starting to watch a new television series.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. When you watch multiple episodes of a single television program in a row, on what type of screen do you watch them?

	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
TV screen	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Laptop	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Desktop computer monitor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tablet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Phone	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. When you watch multiple episodes of a single television program in a row, what viewing methods do you typically use to do so?

	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
Cable TV marathon	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Broadcast TV marathon	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Streaming services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Buying or renting the DVD box set	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Video on demand through my television provider (VOD)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Episodes I have recorded on my digital video recorder (DVR)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
BitTorrent or other file sharing software	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. How often you use each of the following streaming services to watch multiple episodes of television in a row?

	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
Netflix	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hulu / Hulu Plus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Amazon Instant Video	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
HBO Go or HBO Now	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. When you watch multiple episodes of the same television program in a row, how many people are usually watching the program with you?

- 0 people
- 1 person
- 2 people
- 3 or more people
- Other (please specify): _____

18. With whom do you watch multiple episodes of the same television show?

	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
My siblings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My parents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My grandparents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My children	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My grandchildren	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other family members	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My romantic partner	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify):	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

19. For the following types of television programs, how often do you typically watch multiple episodes of the same television program in a row?

	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
Comedy (i.e. Big Bang Theory, Parks and Recreation, Friends, The Office)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Drama (i.e. Breaking Bad, Mad Men, House of Cards)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fantasy/Science Fiction (i.e. Game of Thrones, Doctor Who, Buffy the Vampire Slayer)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Animation (i.e. The Simpsons, Family Guy, South Park, Avatar: The Last Airbender)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comedy-Drama (i.e. Orange is the New Black, Weeds, Transparent, Entourage)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teen Drama (i.e. Gossip Girl, Pretty Little Liars, Friday Night Lights)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Horror/Thriller (i.e. The Walking Dead, Dexter, Lost, Hannibal)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify):	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

20. Please tell us more about the times when you watch multiple episodes of the same television program in a row. For example, why do you watch multiple episodes of the same television program in a row? How do you feel about this?

21. What is your favorite TV show that you've watched multiple episodes of in a row?

Reflections on Viewership

22. Please respond to the following statements.

	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
If I watch the same television show for more than two hours in a row, I feel guilty.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The longer I continue watching episodes of the same television show, the guiltier I feel.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Watching any number of episodes of the same television show in a row makes me feel guilty.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

23. Please respond to the following statements.

	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
When I watch multiple episodes of the same TV show through a streaming service, I feel guilty.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I watch multiple episodes of the same TV show in a cable marathon, I feel guilty.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I watch multiple episodes of the same TV show in a row in a broadcast television marathon, I feel guilty.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I buy or rent a television series DVD box set and watch multiple episodes of that TV show in a row, I feel guilty.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I watch multiple episodes of the same TV show in a row through video on demand (VOD), I feel guilty.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I watch multiple episodes of a prerecorded television show in a row through my DVR, I feel guilty.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I use a BitTorrent or other file sharing software to watch multiple episodes of the same television show in a row, I'm filled with guilt.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

24. Please respond to the following statements.

	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
If I watch multiple episodes of the same television show in a row using a TV set, I feel guilty about it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I watch multiple episodes of the same TV show in a row on my smart phone, I feel guilty.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Watching multiple episodes of the same TV show in a row on my laptop makes me feel guilty.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Watching multiple episodes of the same television show in a row on my tablet fills me with guilt.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I watch multiple episodes of the same television in a row on my desktop computer, I feel guilty.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

25. Please respond to the following statements.

	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
Watching multiple episodes of a sitcom in a row makes me feel guilty.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I watch multiple episodes of a drama in a row, I feel guilty.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I watch multiple episodes of a fantasy or science fiction TV show in a row, I feel guilty.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I watch multiple episodes of an animated television show in a row, I feel guilty.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Watching multiple episodes of a comedy-drama in a row causes me to feel guilty.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I watch multiple episodes of a teen drama in a row, I feel guilty.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I watch multiple episodes of a thriller television show in a row, I'm filled with guilt.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In the earlier question that asked which genres you watch multiple episodes of in a row, you answered: "{q://QID60/ChoiceTextEntryValue/8}." When you watch multiple episodes of the same television show of that genre, how often do you feel guilty?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

26. Please respond to the following statements.

	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
If I watch multiple episodes of the same television show in a row with friends, I feel guilty.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Watching multiple episodes of the same TV show in a row with my parents does not make me feel guilty.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I watch multiple episodes of the same TV show in a row by myself, I feel guilty about it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Watching multiple episodes of the same television show in a row with my siblings causes me to feel guilty.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I watch multiple episodes of the same television show in a row with my romantic partner, I feel guilty.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I watch multiple episodes of the same television show in a row with my grandparents, I feel guilty.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I watch multiple episodes of the same television show in a row with my grandchildren, I feel guilty.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Watching multiple episodes of the same TV show in a row with other family members does not make me feel guilty.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I watch multiple episodes of the same TV show in a row with my children, I feel guilty about it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In the earlier question about who you watch multiple episodes of the same television show with, you answered: "\${q://QID77/ChoiceTextEntryValue}." When you watch multiple episodes of the same television show in a row with them, do you feel guilty?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

27. You entered in a previous question that you felt some amount of guilt for watching multiple episodes of a television show in a row. Guilt can manifest itself in a variety of ways. In the following question, please indicate how often you feel each type of guilt whenever you watch multiple episodes of the same television show in a row.

	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
Guilt for something you did that violates a personal standard.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Guilt for something you didn't do, but should have done.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Guilt for something you did that violates a social or societal standard.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Guilt for watching something that you were supposed to watch with someone else.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Guilt that you are enjoying content that is not held in high regard.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

28. Would you like to see the results of this survey upon its completion?

- Yes please!
- No, thank you.

Please provide your email address so we may send you the results! You are not required to provide an email address. Any email address given will be used solely for the purposes of sending results from this survey, and for no other reasons.

Thank you so much for your participation in this survey. Your time in answering these questions is highly appreciated, and will help answer questions about television viewership never before asked! Thanks again!