

Lauren Goodman

Independent Study & Mentorship

Mr. Speice 4A

13 September 2017

Research Assessment #2

Date: Sept., 13, 2017

Subject: Turning Old Into New: Television Reimagined

MLA Citations:

Shaban, Hamza. "What the Shondaland-Netflix deal means for the future of TV." *Washington Post*, 14 Aug. 2017. *Infotrac Newsstand*, Accessed 15 Sept. 2017.

"Netflix: The Future of Television Programming?" *UWIRE Text*, 4 Nov. 2014, p. 1. *Infotrac Newsstand*, Accessed 13 Sept. 2017.

"Transforming Hollywood conference explores evolving media landscape." *UWIRE Text*, 4 May 2017, p. 1. *Infotrac Newsstand*, Accessed 13 Sept. 2017.

Assessment:

For over half a century television has evolved to what it is today such as the switch from black and white to color, the introduction of new televisions genres like soap operas, the improvement in technology. The latest greatest change has been the newfound prescribes of online streaming services such as Amazon Prime, Hulu, and Netflix with shows from networks that you can binge straight through and even original shows of their own. Because I am interested in television production, it is important for me to learn all about the industry and its market, so I can see what a future television will look like for me.

The first article I read by Hamza Shaban “What the Shondaland-Netflix deal means for the Future of Television” really stuck with me as it pointed out the that streaming services are making such an impacting change to this industry that producers who have worked with cable television networks for decades are making the transition to make shows for these streaming services instead. Part of the reason that this is such a lasting trend is not only Netflix’s large number of subscriptions to the service, but also its offer of “entire libraries of original content, which are tailored to specific audiences and are available on a range of devices”. Shonda Rhimes herself called Netflix, a “vibrant new storytelling home for writers with the unique creative freedom and instantaneous global reach”. That really made me realize how big a platform Netflix really is because the service is able interact directly with its subscribers are allowed to create longer shows without the worry of a timeslot. It made me realize that if I want to make shows without the worry of commercials or a timeslot of a 60-minute show, streaming services are the way to go.

My second article, “Netflix: The Future of Television Programming?” highlighted other reasons why streaming services are much more attractive than traditional cable television programming. One important observation is that these services are not very cost-effective and have access to many seasons of numerous television series from old to new. Viewers will be able to binge-watch or rewatch all of their favorite episodes without waiting a week to see what happens next. I believe that this really speaks to the change and evolving plot devices used in television programming. Cliffhangers are no longer necessary at the end of every episode because now audiences can watch a season of a show straight through. This allows for changes in screenplays where shows can really drag out shows and shows the evolving of television. If I end up writing my own shows, writing for streaming services will be a different writing style because now I wouldn’t have to factor in various elements used on cable television.

Lastly, “Transforming Hollywood conference explores evolving media landscape” emphasizes the overall innovation of the industry lately. Not only can these companies such as Amazon revive the market for independent films and shows, it creates new “developments in the convergence between the tech and entertainment industries”. Overall, it shows how the television industry can still make money without the inconvenience of disrupting advertisements. Streaming services merges the digital age with the traditional television age to community a global community and network of viewers who enjoy similar shows. It really goes to show how everything old can be transformed and made new again.

Researching the evolving of the television industry overall was fascinating to me because it spoke to me what the potential of television and film could be. These changes could also lead to some alterations when I write and produce original content of my own. I will definitely find a way to implement this material in the near future, allowing the experience of constructing innovative television programming with absolute creative freedom.

1. Shaban, Hamza. "What the Shondaland-Netflix deal means for the future of TV." *Washington Post*, 14 Aug. 2017. *Infotrac Newsstand*, Accessed 15 Sept. 2017.

What the Shondaland-Netflix deal means for the future of TV

Hamza Shaban

The Washington Post. (Aug. 14, 2017): News:

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<http://www.washingtonpost.com/>

Byline: Hamza Shaban

Shonda Rhimes, the creator behind smash [television](#) hits, such as "Grey's Anatomy" and "Scandal," will soon develop new shows for streaming giant Netflix, and the platform's 100 million worldwide subscribers, the company announced Sunday. Rhimes and her production company, Shondaland, were hired away from ABC under a multi-year deal, marking the latest aggressive play by streaming services to go head-to-head with Hollywood and the traditional powers of the entertainment industry. The signing of the award-winning writer and producer was a massive win for Netflix, analysts say, and highlights the mounting competition among studios for top-tier talent. Streaming players such as Netflix and Amazon are investing billions of dollars to challenge the [cable television](#) model, vying to offer consumers entire libraries of original content, which are tailored to specific audiences and available on a range of devices, at the push of a button.

Just days ago the battle for premium programming intensified. Last week Netflix said it was buying the comic book company Millarworld, the publisher behind "Kingsman" and "Kick-Ass," in a deal that gives Netflix the tools to make its own interconnected universe of superheroes films and television shows - and a chance to emulate Disney and Marvel's wildly successful run. That same week Netflix

Comment [1]: This is a fact that is an understatement. I have research Shonda Rhimes extensively, and I know that she has been working with ABC for for decades. In fact, ABC's Thursday lineup is the most popular and is made up of all Shondaland shows. It is so surprising and really speaks to the changing industry.

also announced a new six episode series starring former "The Late Show" host David Letterman. And Amazon, for its part, said on Friday that it had inked an exclusive deal with Robert Kirkman, the creator of AMC's "The Walking Dead," who will create new shows for its streaming service. Neither Netflix nor Amazon disclosed how much the deals were worth.

(Amazon chief executive Jeffrey P. Bezos also owns The Washington Post)

Talented producers are now commanding much more power in the rush by entertainment companies to acquire the most compelling shows, said Ross Gerber, chief executive of Gerber Kawasaki, an investment management firm based in Santa Monica. As Netflix aims to develop more of its own programming, the company is flexing its spending muscle to court exceptional producers. In the case of Rhimes for example, she said in a statement Sunday that Netflix understood what she was looking for -- "the opportunity to build a vibrant new storytelling home for writers with the unique creative freedom and instantaneous global reach provided by Netflix's singular sense of innovation."

Netflix offers its streaming service to more than 103 million people across 190 countries.

"It's poach city over there," said Gerber. "This is war, and everyone is going to start circling their wagons around their content creators - because anything that they do is of high value."

For streaming companies and TV networks, the arms race for top programming will likely result in escalating costs, said Michael Pachter, a research analyst at Wedbush Securities, a Los Angeles-based investment bank. "With Netflix entering the bidding on broadcast TV talent, you can expect that Amazon will do the same and HBO will do the same - and it means the cost for everybody goes up." And since commercial TV networks may no longer get first dibs on shows from talented content creators, streaming services may become more and more attractive to audiences at home.

But the broad shift toward streaming is also proving to be a more fragmented consumer experience than many anticipated. While Americans have access to more content than ever before, entertainment companies are now running services with unique and increasingly narrow offerings, looking to squeeze subscription revenue from customers wherever possible. The traditional cable TV bundle may seem outdated, but a flood of direct-to-customer streaming services may make cutting the cord more complicated.

Comment [2]: Unlike cable television, netflix makes for a much more individualized experience because it can tune into people's interests and favorite genre. I think it is what makes netflix shows more successful by making shows on the viewership.

Rhimes' hiring comes as Disney, ABC's parent company, announced that it will unveil a streaming service of its own, and will eventually part ways with Netflix, removing its sought after movies like "Moana" and "Zootopia" from the streaming platform in 2019. While some industry observers questioned Disney's late entry into the competitive world of Internet TV, others emphasized the blow to Netflix, which will soon be stripped of immensely popular children's content. Some experts viewed the timing of Shondaland's Netflix deal as a reprisal of sorts. "Getting a major producer from Disney after this major announcement was clearly not coincidental," said Gerber. "I think Netflix is going to do more of this."

The Los Gatos, California, streaming company trumpeted its partnership with Rhimes as a significant victory. "Shonda Rhimes is one of the greatest storytellers in the history of television," said Ted Sarandos, Netflix's chief content officer in a statement Sunday. "I've gotten the chance to know Shonda and she's a true Netflixer at heart -- she loves TV and films, she cares passionately about her work, and she delivers for her audience."

Rhimes's existing ABC programs will continue to run on the network. While specific shows have not been named in her deal with Netflix, Rhimes is slated to develop both original series and special projects. The cost of the deal was not disclosed.

Comment [3]: Not surprising, Disney, which is in charge of ABC is making it's own streaming service will be a bold competitor against Netflix because of all of its Disney, ABC, and Freeform shows. This makes for massive content. Ultimately, by major production networks going towards streaming services shows the type of impact it is making.

2. "Netflix: The Future of Television Programming?" *UWIRE Text*, 4 Nov. 2014, p. 1. *Infotrac Newsstand*, Accessed 13 Sept. 2017.

Netflix: The Future of Television Programming?

UWIRE Text. (Nov. 4, 2014): p1.

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<http://uwire.com/?s=UWIRE+Text&x=26&y=14&=Go>

Photo courtesy of screencrush.com

I was beyond excited when I found out a couple weeks ago that *Friends*, my favorite television show of all time, was coming to Netflix in January. My day instantly got better. And about a month ago, I was experiencing similar feelings of happiness towards the online streaming media site: on Oct. 1, Netflix brought *Gilmore Girls*, another of my favorite TV shows, to their site, and legitimately, for an entire weekend, I did nothing but watch hours of the series online. Procrastination at its finest.

These two shows will have been brought to the online site within just months of each other. In their entirety. Available for me to watch wherever, whenever I want, and completely at my convenience.

Tell me: what's better than that? Finding the reruns in syndication? No, I don't think so. With my schedule, I'm not home to watch these shows when they air in reruns. I could DVR them, but really, there's only so much space you can use, and to find all the episodes playing in order? Not going to happen.

Netflix is allowing me the opportunity to relive my two favorite television shows from the time they premiered to the very last episode; in order, not one episode missing, not one moment forgotten. Tell me - with the exception of buying the DVD box sets at quite an expensive price - where else do I have the ability to do that, so easily, effortlessly, and for less than \$10 a month?

Comment [4]: This is a major convenience because a lot of old shows from previous decades are unavailable on cable television. It almost provides for an archive so old shows aren't forgotten.

Comment [5]: This is very uncostly and makes the entire process so much easier.

Netflix is nothing new: it's been around for subscription since 1999, and in 2008, became available to stream television shows and movies online for a low cost a month. But what is new about Netflix is how the company is truly upping its game.

When I first became introduced to Netflix around 2009, I thought the site was lacking. No good movies, and few good television shows; that was my opinion, anyway. Fast forward to today, in 2014, and you've got the site streaming and getting ready to stream my two most beloved television series. Big difference. But take my personal feelings out of the equation, and look at what Netflix has to offer to everyone today.

It has television shows like Breaking Bad, arguably the most popular cable show to premiere in the last six years, in its entirety on the site. It has Scandal, which has a massive cult following of binge-watchers and Olivia Pope obsessors, streaming all seasons up to the current one, which is airing right now on its home network, ABC. I still feel it has some work to do in the movie department, but to me, that's not where the current success of Netflix lies; that success is almost entirely in its television aspect.

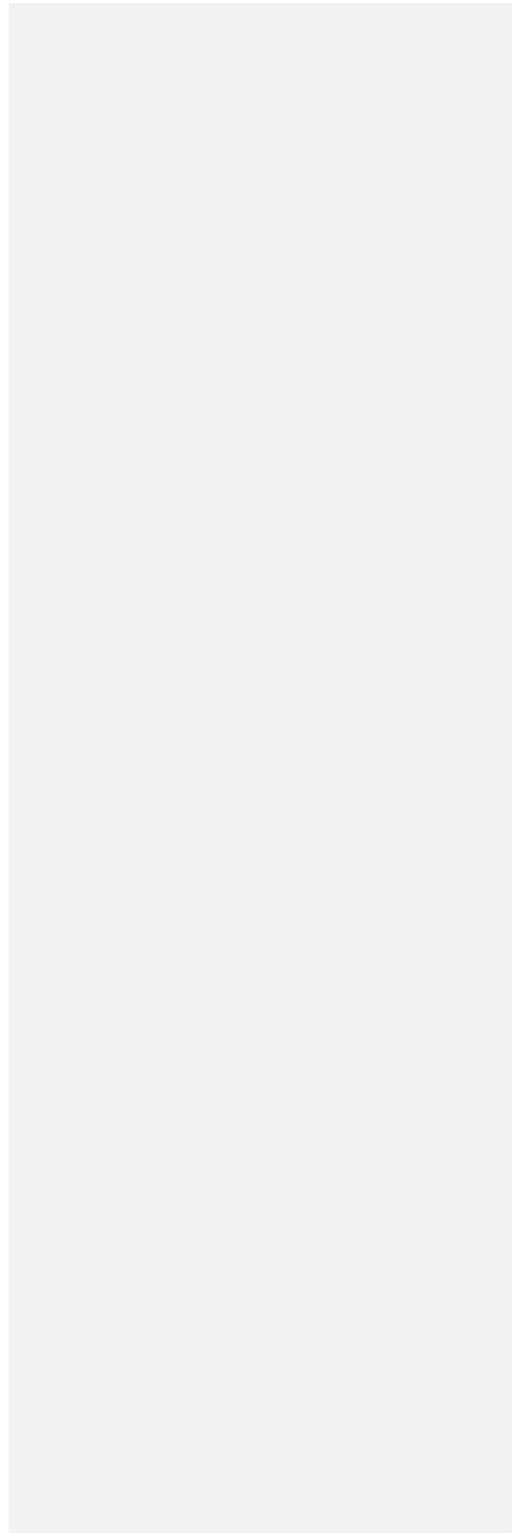
Photo courtesy of zap2it.com

And likely the most innovative thing about the company and its use of television programming is the creation of its own, original series' and content. House of Cards, a political drama series, was released as an exclusive Netflix original series in February 2013. Orange is the New Black, a comedy-drama series documenting a women's prison, became the most popular original series to follow House of Cards, and was released on Netflix in July 2013. Both received multiple Emmy Award nominations, and gained huge followings.

On Oct. 23, Netflix announced three new original series that will all debut on the online streaming site in 2015. Are we looking at the future of popular television programming? Since its origin, Netflix has brought us unoriginal series from different networks and cable. But now, the company is adding more currently-aired, hugely successful television shows to its roster. In addition, they're taking their original programming to the next level, hoping to copy the success of House of Cards and Orange is the New Black.

Comment [6]: Shows that streaming services are ranking up major successes, some more than cable network companies. I think this is because Netflix is a promotional platform that viewers don't have to wait to watch, resulting in a massive following.

So, is this where the future success of television lies? In the next five years, will people plan to stream Netflix at their convenience, whenever they want, not just to watch previously aired episodes of their favorite TV shows from network or cable, but to watch new episodes of Netflix's own, original programming? I guess we'll find out, but with the way it's going now, I certainly wouldn't be surprised.



3. "Transforming Hollywood conference explores evolving media landscape." *UWIRE Text*, 4 May 2017, p. 1. *Infotrac Newsstand*, Accessed 13 Sept. 2017.

Transforming Hollywood conference explores evolving media landscape

UWIRE Text. (May 4, 2017): p1.

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<http://uwire.com/?s=UWIRE+Text&x=26&y=14&=Go>

USC and UCLA will combine forces Friday to coordinate the eighth annual **Transforming Hollywood** conference, held in the James Bridges Theater starting at 9 a.m.

The event, which aims to educate attendees about the changing landscape of entertainment and technology, is co-directed by Denise Mann, co-head of the UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television's Producers Program and professor in the Department of Film, Television and Digital Media, and Henry Jenkins, provost professor of communication, journalism, cinematic arts and education at USC.

This year's conference, entitled "**Transforming Hollywood 8: The Work of Art in the Age of Algorithmic Culture**," centers on the shift of tech companies that are completely operated online toward media and entertainment, and its implications.

The conference consists of four panels. The panels - "Playing With Snackable Content in Virtual Marketplaces," "Fake News and Struggles Over Circulation," "Music Streaming & The Splinternets: The New, Competing, Cultural Curators" and "Creating Binge-worthy 'Streaming Web TV'" - feature a variety of tech company CEOs, journalists, show creators, producers, online news hosts and academics.

[Related: '**Transforming Hollywood**' explores changes in TV industry]

Comment [7]: It is so ironic that schools I am actually applying to are doing the same research as me. I believe this is a sign I am going in the right direction with my research.

The goal of the event is to promote education, critical thought and discussion about how algorithms are used to gather consumer preferences and recommend similar content. An algorithm is a program-based routine that collects and interprets data to solve a problem or present a solution such as a TV show recommendation based on user tendencies, said Rob Kramer, a panelist at the event. Kramer is the co-founder and chief product officer of PurposeLab, a product studio that develops design ideas and software products to help build businesses. Entertainment companies need to expand their businesses to the internet to competitively sustain themselves in the long term, he said. "We're finding it an intellectual riddle to look at how Hollywood is going to adapt, if it's going to be able to compete, or if a different set of mergers and acquisitions will occur that will change the media landscape as we go forward," Mann said.

Panel One focuses on the creation of "snackable content," or short-form web content designed for limited attention spans and multitasking in everyday life, Mann said. In particular, the panel highlights videos designed for digital platforms, like Tastemade and Twitch.

One panelist is Larry Fitzgibbon, the CEO and co-founder of Tastemade, a multichannel network that specializes in creating primarily bite-sized video content of food for digital platforms like Instagram, Snapchat and Facebook. Tastemade took the trend of posting aesthetic pictures of food on social media and extrapolated it into a short-form content business, Mann said.

Panel Two, moderated by Jenkins, will delve into the effects of big data collection and algorithms on the quality of news, he said. Essentially, fake news is amplified because of an algorithmic system that tracks the amount of views a link garners but doesn't account for the reliability of information, Jenkins said. Additionally, fake news becomes profitable because of the catering of ads to users based on their tracked preferences and viewership, further circulating false information, Jenkins said.

"It's very possible for something that's crafted to hit an emotional hotspot - that's designed to match the beliefs of a particular segment of the population - to suddenly become the most talked about news item at a given moment," Jenkins said.

Panel Four, moderated by Neil Landau, associate director of screenwriting for television at UCLA's School of Theater, Film and Television, will include a discussion of how streaming services such as Netflix and Hulu are providing unknown content creators with more opportunities to break into the entertainment business. But the streaming sites also collect data about consumers and create an overabundance of content that a single person could not feasibly consume, Landau said. In essence, streaming services track everything from the shows someone watches to the shoes they buy online, creating a database of their preferences to cater other TV and movie content to them.

"Netflix and Amazon - they not only know what you're choosing to watch in a given moment, but they know everything about you," Landau said.

James Fleury, a cinema and media studies doctoral student, is on a team with other doctoral students working on Havas Media Group's 18 Hubs' Digital Incubator and Think Tank. Led by Mann, it meets to discuss developments in the convergence between the tech and entertainment industries, he said. Fleury will be attending the **Transforming Hollywood** event and is familiar with the trade-off relationship between consumers and digital content platforms.

"(With tech entertainment platforms), you're getting access to a lot of content, but that's in exchange for permitting surveillance from the companies," Fleury said. "So you're sacrificing part of who you are, in a way, to get access. ... It's an interesting question - to what extent do people even care that they're trading their information?"

The algorithm used by streaming networks to assess consumers' interests helps them find a nearly guaranteed audience and monetary gain as a result, Landau said.

[Related: Former UCLA postdoctoral scholar schools Hollywood on scientific accuracy]

This algorithmic system contrasts greatly with the trial-and-error guessing game of broadcast networks that spend millions of dollars on pilots, many of which never make it on air and are beholden to advertising and ratings if they do, Landau said. Streaming services, in contrast, rely on subscriptions for revenue.

"Broadcast networks ... would try to create a show that was something for everyone," Landau said.

"The big change in the digital television revolution is that niche is the new mainstream."

Comment [8]: True, which is a reason why people like it because it factors in your profile and previously watched shows.

Additionally, larger digital platforms such as Google, Apple, Facebook and Amazon are moving toward entertainment, using media as a lure to keep consumers on their platforms for longer stretches of time, Mann said.

For example, Amazon Studios is providing a flood of investment in the movie business, helping revive the market for independent film, Mann said. However, its media production is likely secondary to its core business of e-commerce, she added.

Mann said the question that remains is whether machine-driven algorithms are enough to drive audiences to discover content, or if there is a need for human curators to intervene in decision-making.

"As each of the tech platforms is moving to media and entertainment, it's having a dramatic effect on the way we consume media," Mann said. "Silicon Valley and Hollywood are competing for the same audience."

Comment [9]: I believe that not only is it transforming an old market, but is also introducing a new industry by reviving long-standing stagnant industries.