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Publishing Flow

DVD Box Sets and the Reconception of Television

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Commercial television has functioned as a flow medium for more than fifty years, premised on the sale of time (and ostensible viewers) to advertisers. By contrast, the film industry has operated as a publisher, selling or renting its individual media products to theaters. During the home video era, while the film industry shifted its focus to the VCR, television remained reliant on advertising and has held only a marginal presence in the video software market. However, increasing corporate synergy and the swift rise of DVD technology have prompted the practice of publication as an alternative means of television distribution and reception. This article explores why television did not succeed on VHS but has been transformed by DVD. The DVD box set in particular, as introduced with Fox's first set of *The X-Files* in 2000, has reconceived television series as collectible objects, fostering a new commodity relationship between television and its viewers.

Keywords: *television; video; media; DVD; VCR; film*

Television is currently engaged in an array of changes that affect how it is financed, produced, distributed, experienced, and linked with the rest of culture. For the past two decades, the domestic set itself has been transforming, in fits and starts, from an analog, low-definition receiver of broadcast signals to a digital, high-definition, customizable multimedia portal, incorporating hundreds of channels, an augmented audiovisual range, and a greater capacity for interactivity. These changes stem from shifts in the institutions of the media, as new technologies, business models, regulatory structures, programming forms, and modes of viewing interact with the old, with widely varying and often unpredictable results. Because so many of these forces are in flux and subject to external political and economic events, the outcome of this period is a matter of great debate. It is impossible to gauge exactly what "television" will be in another decade or so. However, it is clear that the centralized,

mass-disseminated cultural institution that has held sway since the middle of the twentieth century is largely ceding to a regime premised on individual choice, marked by highly diversified content, atomized reception, and malleable technologies.

While this transition will likely not mark the end of television's particular role in the reproduction of culture, it still confronts us with the necessity to rethink long-held conceptions of the medium and of the media in general. The current changes around television are part of a larger conceptual shift across all media, as the boundaries between previously discrete forms (text, film, broadcasting, video, and sound recordings) are increasingly blurred—aesthetically, technologically, industrially, and culturally—challenging established theoretical paradigms. Technology, industry, and culture are not autonomous domains; each is shaped by the other in particular ways, helping construct particular media forms and practices in particular contexts. It is crucial to remember this point as we investigate the media's past and speculate on its future, for its aesthetic forms, industrial and regulatory practices, and uses and meanings are all tied together.

Within this "forest" of media change, it is still important to study how particular "trees" are adapting to the new environment. For television, these changes began in the mid-1970s, at a pivotal moment in media history: the introduction of home video.¹ Home video devices—in particular, videocassette recorders (VCRs), but also video cameras (camcorders), laserdisc players, digital/personal video recorders (DVRs/PVRs), and digital versatile disc (DVD) players—differ in their specific functions, but all have in common the primary innovation of video technology: the ability to selectively play back prerecorded programs.² In addition, and just as significant, most of these devices can also record audio-video signals onto the fixed media of tape or disc. In performing these tasks, they are inevitably connected to domestic television sets, forcing television—as both a technology and cultural form, to borrow Raymond Williams's description—into a complex relationship with home video that foregrounds its function as an audiovisual display device rather than its more established role as a dominant modern cultural institution. This physical and cultural connection between television and home video enables people to use their sets to create or access programming on their own terms rather than stay locked to the fare and schedule dictated by the broadcasting industry.³

However, despite the ubiquity and unique qualities of home video technology, it has been sorely understudied in the academy. Several important articles, collections, and books were published in the wake of the initial video expansion in the late 1980s and early 1990s, but as the devices became part of everyday life, scholarly interest in this area waned

and has been almost nonexistent when compared to more established fields of study like film and television or recently emerging concerns like new media and the Internet.⁴ This is unfortunate but not surprising given the dominant impression of home video as a neutral adjunct to both film and television. The VCR, for example, sits in the public and academic imaginary as it does in our living rooms, quietly next to the set, a seemingly functional means to an end: the unfettered reproduction of extant film and television programming. However, each of these sleek boxes, ranging from the first VCR to the latest PVR, are not mere enhancements of media; they are reconceptions, profoundly altering our relationship with dominant media institutions and with media culture in general.

While home video has been physically connected to television at the level of technology and everyday use, it has not been as attached to the television industry (i.e., production studios, networks, and stations). Instead, the VCR has functioned predominately as a domestic extension of the film industry rather than as a supplement to television. As Frederick Wasser (2001) explores in his study of the relationship between home video and Hollywood, while the film industry first viewed the VCR with suspicion, it has since become its most crucial technology, fostering new markets for their products and providing the majority of their revenue since the late 1980s. By contrast, television had never, until recently, established the same relationship with home video. Television's primary goal is selling potential audiences to advertisers, not selling products to consumers. Accordingly, home video releases of television series have been a relatively marginal cultural form during the video era.

The industrial and technological changes of the past several years have considerably altered these relationships, as the boundaries between media producers and distributors have all but vanished in the age of synergy, and the VCR has largely given way to the DVD player. All six national commercial broadcast networks in the United States are now part of larger megamedia corporations with interests in film and television production and distribution, cable programming networks, cable system operation, book and magazine publishing, sound recording production and distribution, and home video distribution, among other endeavors.⁵ This has facilitated the "horizontal" exploitation of media properties across different forms and venues (i.e., television, film, recordings, books, video), enabling new revenue possibilities. DVD technology, introduced in 1997, has been especially critical in this regard, not only for the film industry but even more so for television. With much higher resolution sound and image, random access capability, a smaller size, and most significant, a larger storage capacity, the DVD has rejuvenated the home video industry and has finally enabled television to achieve what film had by the mid-1980s, namely, a viable direct-to-consumer market for its programming.

The pivotal innovation of this achievement is the season box set: a multiple-disc DVD package containing an entire season's worth of episodes from a particular television series. First introduced by Fox with the release of the first season of *The X-Files* in April 2000, the box set materializes all the significant discourses of early twenty-first century media change: high technology, corporate consolidation, user convenience, and commodity fetishism. It extends the reach of the institution of television into home video to an unprecedented degree and functions as an intriguing aesthetic object in its own right. It culminates the decades-long relationship between television and its viewers, completing the circle through the material purchase—rather than only the ephemeral viewing—of broadcast texts.

This essay investigates the changing relationship between television, home video, and their viewers and users and argues that DVD technology has enabled its culmination in the box set. I use Bernard Miège's distinction between publishing and flow models of media production and distribution to explore how industries adapt to new technologies by drawing from appropriate existing models.⁶ Despite their increasing textual and corporate confluence, film and television have utilized quite distinct business strategies and practices for the bulk of their existence. Accordingly, while film has prospered on home video for almost two decades, television has not. The success of the DVD box set has brought television's home video practices more in line with those of film and indicates how new technologies can prompt new uses and new practices while preserving old goals.

Publishing Versus Flow

In *The Capitalization of Cultural Production*, Bernard Miège (1989) describes three models of cultural production. Two of these, publishing and flow, correspond with the film and television industries.

Under the publishing model, firms produce media material for sale directly to consumers. Book publishers and record labels are the archetypal firms in this conception, as income is generated by the sale of media material as tangible objects. The film industry is also a "publisher" of sorts as it has always made its products available to viewers on a paid admission basis (i.e., one ticket, one screening). Although Sony initially promoted home video in the 1970s as a means to capture broadcast flow (see below), it has also functioned predominately as a form of publishing. Viewers rent or purchase tapes or discs for home use, with the revenue split among retailers, wholesalers, distributors, and producers. Hollywood was initially uncertain about home video, as it had been with television, for upsetting their established business model, but it has since merged the

new technology (and its concomitant modes of viewing) into its operations with minimal turmoil.⁷ Once the exclusive province of theatrical distributors and exhibitors (in the form of 35 mm or 16 mm film), feature films are now routinely made available directly to consumers as tangible, obtainable home video objects (i.e., tapes and discs). Video releases initially generated only ancillary revenue, but since the late 1980s, domestic U.S. video sale and rental revenues have consistently (and increasingly) outpaced domestic box office grosses. In 2002, video revenue totaled \$20.3 billion, more than twice the take at the box office.⁸ Accordingly, home video, rather than theatrical exhibition, is the primary source of profits in Hollywood.

The home video version of a theatrical film release is now an expected cultural artifact, its appearance taken for granted. The phrase "I'll just wait for the video" is a commonsense expression of this sentiment, indicating how effectively the film industry has used the publishing model in adapting to the challenge of a new technology. The successful cultural and economic confluence of film and video was facilitated by the symmetry between individual films and home video objects themselves. Drawing on existent, tactile relationships between readers and books and listeners and sound recordings, a single film almost always fits on a single tape or disc, taking up about as much space as a trade paperback book or, in the case of laserdisc and DVD, a single LP or CD. Tapes and discs are thus spatially congruent with existing fixed media forms, fitting easily into typical domestic settings on shelves, entertainment centers, and coffee tables, the titles on their boxes and labels corresponding to the singular texts they contain. Accordingly, they are usually placed next to books and recorded music both at home and, importantly, in retailers, emphasizing their similarity as tangible media objects. As the film industry was already adept at publishing, delivering specific titles to specific places for specific audiences, releasing their products on home video was not as disruptive a practice as they first feared, despite the major differences between private and public film-viewing experiences. Films on video were still marketed as individual texts and around familiar theatrical elements: stars, genre, release dates, auteurs, and "high concept."

While the publishing model connects producers and consumers more or less directly (through the sale and rental of media texts), the flow model is premised on a different exchange: between producers, broadcasters, and advertisers. In this model, producers sell programming to broadcasters, who then sell access to potential viewers—that is, time within programming on their widely distributed channels—to advertisers. Unlike in the publishing model, actual media users (i.e., viewers) are irrelevant in this model, represented only by the statistical fictions of ratings and demographic data. Their ostensible role is to sit back and passively receive the

programming and advertising sent out by stations, networks, and sponsors. As Eileen Meehan points out, unless you are directly participating in the ratings sample (e.g., by registering your viewership on a Nielsen diary or PeopleMeter), your choice of programming is superfluous to the established economic relationship between producers, broadcasters, advertisers, and the providers of ratings data.⁹

Thus, while the publishing model deals in media as discrete objects, the flow model is premised instead on the aggregate experience of television over time, rather than on individual texts. Accordingly, television has long urged viewers to "stay tuned" to boost contact with advertisements across their schedule. Network slogans have openly advocated this principle, as NBC promoted "must-see TV" as the linchpin of their schedule in the 1990s and 2000s, while CBS made the Zen-like claim that "It's all here." Most important, while individual television episodes have a particular duration and series eventually cease production after a finite number of episodes, televisual flow itself never ends. This principle is seen not only in the linkage of programs on an individual night of viewing but also in promoting the entire network lineup, in attracting viewers to new fare in the future (e.g., from summer to fall), and most significantly for the current transition to home video, in sustaining interest in particular series for as long as possible, even long after that series has ceased production. As Raymond Williams famously claimed, "the fact of flow" is "the central television experience."¹⁰

Despite the centrality of flow to the broadcasting business, licensed products tied to particular broadcast programs have been sold since radio emerged as a national medium in the 1920s. These have always been ancillary revenue sources, based on familiar characters and situations, but not copies of the actual texts themselves.¹¹ However, the VCR's recording function, promoted by hardware manufacturers who recognized a growing consumer desire for flexible broadcast schedules in the 1970s, exists precisely to harness broadcast flow, to produce copies of it for later viewing.¹² In capturing flow in this manner, domestic video recording complicates the broadcasting model in two ways that expand the role of the viewer beyond their ostensible duty as hypothetical eyeballs.

Timeshifting, recording programs for later playback, destabilizes the relationship between advertiser, broadcaster, and viewer because advertisements are likely to be skipped on the eventual viewing of the program.¹³ Timeshifting alone is generally only a postponement of broadcast flow; once watched, recorded programs are likely taped over or are lost in the shuffle of mis- or unlabelled tapes that usually crowd around domestic VCRs. A less prevalent but arguably more significant recording practice is acquisition, whereby a collection, or more appropriately an archive of television, is assembled from captured broadcast flows. As

detailed by Kim Bjarkman, collectors regard television flow as rightfully available for recording. They often consider themselves better caretakers of programs than producers or broadcasters as they preserve the flow of broadcasting into tangible texts that can be collected, organized, maintained, and traded.¹⁴ While the film industry has generally been successful in shepherding such collectors into renting or purchasing officially released video objects, the television industry, having built their business around time rather than physical texts, has not been oriented toward such exchanges. In lieu of “officially released” television on home video, unauthorized television collecting (via VHS) has flourished, albeit on the margins, with very little effect on the business of television.

However, the fact that some viewers wish to preserve their favorite television shows on video suggests that a potential market exists for commercially released (i.e., officially “published”) home video copies of television series. Accordingly, the owners and producers of television programming have at least tried to establish a presence in the home video market. While television programs have been released on home video since the early 1980s, the dissonance between the flow and publishing models, coupled with the significant limitations of VHS technology, have complicated these attempts.

Unlike a film text, which is usually experienced as one unbroken totality, most fictional television is serial, presented in separate episodes. Television series (particularly in the United States) are designed primarily for optimum modularity, adhering rigidly to specific formulas regarding program length (e.g., thirty or sixty minutes), daypart (daytime, prime-time, “fringe”), genre (sitcom, drama), and frequency of viewing (daily, weekly, annual). This has historically facilitated broadcast flow, standardizing the delivery of particular audiences around particular genres and times, stabilizing television-advertising markets, and developing an established “brand” for continued exploitation. Accordingly, this modularity has also fostered the episodic form, with twenty-two to twenty-six episodes in the standard season order for most network prime-time programs in the United States. Thus, while a typical Hollywood film currently runs just under two hours, a full season of a typical thirty-minute Hollywood sitcom is the equivalent of nearly eight-and-a-half hours, even without commercials. In a home video culture that defaults to the feature film two-hour program length—it is no coincidence that most blank consumer VHS tapes run exactly this long—individual television episodes are too short for one tape, while entire seasons, let alone series, are much too long. The available options for dealing with this issue have had to sacrifice thoroughness by releasing only particularly significant episodes (e.g., *The Best of The Honeymooners*) or physical space (by filling up retailers’ and consumers’ shelves). For example, while the popular

drama series *The X-Files* would be a likely candidate for home video, its signature convoluted narrative arc complicates any possible "best of" configuration. In addition, since it tallied 202 episodes in its nine-year run on Fox, a complete release of this series on VHS (with two episodes per tape) would take up over one hundred cassettes and ten feet of horizontal shelf space. Would viewers dedicate enough domestic space and money to purchase this many tapes? Would stores want to sacrifice their retail space as well to stock this many titles from the same series?

Secondly, television programs have been seemingly ubiquitous on television itself, in the form of reruns. Many popular older shows have long been syndicated to local stations and cable networks, where they may even run several times a day over a period of years. Moreover, because of the expansion of cable and satellite channels in the second half of the 1990s, even less prominent series are now available on networks such as Bravo, Mystery, the Sci-Fi Channel, Trio, TV Land, and in Britain, UK Gold. More recently, media conglomeration has brought about simultaneous first runs of new network programming on cable networks, a practice that spreads the cost and risk of programming to more business units and builds a potentially larger aggregate audience for particular programs.¹⁵ As Derek Kompare argues in his study of rerun syndication, repetition of programming in this fashion is an essential strategy of the television industry, maximizing returns on established products, fulfilling broadcasting's insatiable need to economically fill time, drawing advertisers and ostensible viewers to familiar material, and reinforcing the perception of television's past as a national "heritage."¹⁶ From the standpoint of the television industry, this combination of seriality and repetition ensures that television series will continue to be distributed on television, generating syndication and advertising revenue across the schedule and throughout the years. Conversely, however, rerun syndication has also been an effective argument against the marketing of programs on home video on principle. Why release a series on home video that is already widely available on television? If such a release were successful, how would that effect the program's future syndication value? Accordingly, a home video release of a television series has been a much more circumscribed endeavor than the sale of the same series into syndication. For example, while *Seinfeld*, one of the signature series of the 1990s, is currently a solid rerun staple in local and cable television and has generated well more than \$1 billion in rerun syndication fees, it has yet to be released on home video in any form.

Although a relative few television programs have long been available on home video, they have never commanded a significant market share, primarily because of the factors discussed above. The contrast between television and film on home video is stark: while the majority of extant

feature-length Hollywood films released during the sound era have found their way to tape or disc at least once, the number of television series made available on home video represents only a minute percentage of the output of the American television industry. This marginalization has been compounded by the fact that "television" has not been a common category in most video rental and sales outlets. Home video has long been industrially structured and culturally promoted as "film," with the vast majority of tapes and discs in the market drawn from theatrical features and the very iconography of video retailing redolent with Hollywood imagery.¹⁷ Accordingly, the medium-specificity of television ceased to function as a viable genre in video stores, and its programs were generally folded into established cinematic genres (i.e. "comedy," "drama," "science fiction," "documentary," etc.).

Despite significant barriers, however, television series have still been released to home video. While precise sales data are difficult to obtain, it can be argued that these releases have done at least well enough to justify further television titles, suggesting that although the market share has been slim, it has been consistent and, thus, viable. According to Sam Frank's (1999) *Buyer's Guide to Fifty Years of Television on Home Video*, hundreds of different television series had been made available on commercial home video in the United States by the end of the century.¹⁸ Most of these programs have had only small-run releases on niche distributors like Shokus, which specializes in little-seen series in the public domain from the 1950s and 1960s, or through mail-order clubs like Columbia House, which serviced relatively small market niches without having to win over retailers. Most significant, virtually every series made available on home video during this period was only ever released in individual episode or incomplete collected configurations; only a scant handful were ever released in totality on VHS or laserdisc.¹⁹

However, the introduction of DVD technology at the turn of the century provided a critical spark to the expansion of television on home video because of several interrelated factors: the rapid, exponential growth of the DVD market; the unique properties and distinction of the technology itself; and the successful creation and exploitation of cult audiences. The culmination of these factors has been the season box set, the video object that successfully converted broadcast flow to published text and finally made television tangible.

The DVD Effect

Since I am arguing that DVD represents a more significant shift in media than has been acknowledged thus far, it is worthwhile to consider how new technologies intersect with existing practices. While we may refer to the

shiny boxes and devices that we call "technology" as "revolutionary," they are ultimately only the physical manifestations of developments within existing social, industrial, and cultural formations. As Brian Winston states, "There is nothing in the histories of electrical and electronic communication systems to indicate that significant major changes have not been accommodated by pre-existing social formations."²⁰ Despite the ostensibly neutral science of the laboratory, technologies are fundamentally social, produced from and entering into established contexts that facilitate particular uses while curtailing others. Accordingly, it is certainly significant that the key media technologies of the past fifty years, ranging from analog audiotape to the personal computer to digital high-definition video, have all centered on the issue of information storage and reproduction, helping foster the move away from "live" media forms and toward the collection and recirculation of existing texts. As media industries have required increasing amounts of revenue from extant products to survive and as media users have favored media that provide flexibility and choice, these technologies have fostered changes in the modes of production, distribution, and exhibition, as well as in domestic media practices. Since the triple-whammy introduction of home video, cable networks, and video game systems in the mid-1970s, domestic media consumption has expanded alongside new media technologies, incorporating the cultivation of not only new niche demographics (e.g., video gamers) but also viable markets for the continued distribution of "old" texts in "new" configurations, such as cable networks and home video.²¹ Although it wasn't the first home video technology, nor even the first significant use of the optical disc format, DVD technology has reenergized this process of continual expansion and adoption. Accordingly, it is not only a "spin-off" or upgrade from VHS but rather the first significant media format of the twenty-first century.

The venerable VHS cassette has been around since 1976, a geological tenure in electronic media terms. Although efficient as short-term storage and playback media, VHS cassettes are also relatively bulky and prone to dust collection. Like all forms of magnetic tape, VHS tape is vulnerable to stretching, jamming, and audible and visual "drop-outs" (i.e., conspicuous flaws in sound and image reproduction). Moreover, VHS tape has a relatively short lifespan. As a tape ages, the magnetic particles flake off, thus reducing fidelity, and polluting VCRs with the resultant dust. Nevertheless, since the demise of the domestic version of Sony's beta format in the mid-1980s, VHS has been the only major format for domestic video playback and recording. While a significant upgrade (Super VHS) was introduced in 1987 and smaller formats were developed to shrink the size of camcorders, none of these have challenged VHS's hold on the market. A major reason for VHS's market longevity (despite its considerable drawbacks as a storage and playback medium) has likely been that its

predominant uses—the rental of feature films and the timeshifting of television programs—are all short-term activities. While video rental stores have to manage their inventories carefully to balance high initial demand for new releases with an appropriately varied selection of older titles, this has not been an issue for most consumers, who have not purchased that many tapes; long-term fidelity is not an issue if there is no long term. In other words, VHS was “good enough” to justify its primary uses.²² For those consumers most interested in acquisition and high fidelity (i.e., “videophiles”), the only viable alternative to VHS at the consumer level was laserdisc, which maintained a slim hold on the high end of the home video market in the 1980s and 1990s.

This situation held sway until the spring of 1997, when DVD technology was introduced after years of development and delay. Since then, the DVD player has supplanted the VCR as the most quickly adapted electronic appliance in history. Despite a global recession since 2000, DVD players are on an exponential growth curve and are now present in nearly half of U.S. homes, a landmark reached in half the time of the VCR.²³ Since its introduction, DVD’s novelty and clear superiority over VHS has won over the avid videophiles that made up the “early adapters” to the technology, and distributors, retailers, and the broad base of video users soon followed. As the latest “must-have” technology, DVD has received all the press and, increasingly, all the retail space, as VCRs and VHS tapes have been pushed to the margins in major retail outlets like Best Buy, Borders, Circuit City, and Amazon.com. While VHS remains a substantial market, its demise has been hastened by the market shift toward DVD at all levels. Accordingly, like the vinyl LP in the early 1990s, the VHS tape in the early 2000s is an endangered species, despite the fact that VCRs currently still outnumber DVD players by more than two to one.

DVD technology is not only “new”; it is also demonstrably “improved.” Even the disc itself, and its packaging, have decided aesthetic advantages over their VHS counterparts. The DVD extends the twenty-year reign of the slim, shiny five-inch circle of the compact disc (CD), signifying the long-delayed arrival of video in a familiar, convenient digital format, and implying it will do for home video what the CD has done for home audio.²⁴ Similarly, the DVD case functions as a logical merger of the VHS sleeve and the CD jewel box, with the height of the former and the width of the latter. However, unlike the Spartan, open-bottom sleeve that provides minimal protection to VHS tapes, both the dominant DVD case designs—the plastic Amaray “keepcase” and Warner Bros.’ cardboard “snapper” case—offer more security, effectively protecting the disc while taking up even less space.

The state-of-the-art outward appearance of DVD is reflected in the technical specifications of the format itself. Optically encoded with binary

data rather than the physical manipulation of magnetic particles, DVD reproduction is clean and vibrant against the fuzzy and muddled look and sound of VHS. This factor alone generated the initial "early adapter" boost from cinephiles, who appreciated a home presentation of films that was much closer to theatrical glory, with finer detail, deeper contrast, a wider color spectrum, a cinematic aspect ratio, and multiple-channel sound. In addition, the "random access" feature of DVD has fostered an array of additional textual materials: stylish interactive menus, behind-the-scenes documentaries, theatrical trailers, audio commentaries, photo galleries, cast and crew biographies, storyboards, deleted scenes, and hidden "Easter eggs."²⁵ Moreover, these enhancements and additions are available in a smaller package, with a storage capacity much larger than either VHS or laserdisc. Several hours of high-fidelity audio and video signals can be held on one side of a DVD, tripling (or better) VHS's storage capacity while greatly improving on its audiovisual quality. Thus, an entire film, and all of its additional material, is easily experienced in high-fidelity glory without changing the disc or getting up from the couch.

DVD has sparked a new approach to the video distribution of feature films, as the upgraded audiovisual quality and inclusion of extra materials has raised the cultural status of video releases both within Hollywood and in general. While discs still ostensibly serve as functional copies of an original text, the additional features included on most DVDs amplify various elements of their central text, thus producing new media experiences.²⁶ Simply put, watching a DVD of a feature film is a distinct experience from watching it in the theater, on television, or on videotape. The uniqueness of this experience has certainly been exploited by the media industry, as most releases contain more material than can be experienced in one sitting. Accordingly, seizing an opportunity to reshape the home video market, Hollywood studios and other DVD distributors have emphasized sales more than rentals. Led by Warner Home Video president Warren Lieberfarb's veritable crusade to launch DVD as a purchasable format, studios moved away from the two-tier pricing system that had maintained the VHS rental market since the early 1980s and, instead, introduced DVD with lower, "day-and-date" pricing.²⁷ This made titles more accessible to consumers at the beginning of the home video window rather than months or even years later as had been the case during the VHS era. The list price for new feature films on DVD is typically US\$24.99 as of this writing, but standard discounts at major retailers lower this by several dollars. For example, the James Bond film *Die Another Day* (2002) was widely available for \$14.99 on its June 2003 release, despite a \$29.99 list price.

While this shift to acquisition certainly indicates a significant change in the typical domestic consumption of film (a topic itself worthy of further

investigation), I am concerned here with the more profound effect DVD has had on the relationship between television and home video. The crucial issue of the physical space taken up by television-based home video objects, as described above, has now been effectively solved.

Space has rarely entered into the study of domestic media consumption.²⁸ The content of the screen or speaker has been the historical focus of media studies rather than the structure and placement of such objects in particular cultural spaces. However, space is a significant consideration for home video. Recorded media are always designed for optimum convenience, a quality that includes not only accessibility but also modularity—that is, individual units should be similar enough in dimension to others of its kind to facilitate mass production, mass retailing, and domestic storage. Extensive media collections, so much a part of the modern domestic environment, require effective, aesthetically compatible storage. Whether the collections consist of books, LPs, CDs, VHS tapes, laserdiscs, or DVDs, users generally take care to store their media properly, ideally in some form of order. Indeed, as Bjarkman notes, the pursuit of “order,” however defined, is one of the distinct pleasures of video collecting.²⁹

Television DVD releases typically hold two to four episodes per disk, thus condensing two units into one. However, since a DVD case also takes up about half the shelf space of a VHS tape, this is actually a fourfold reduction in space. Moreover, as discussed above, the DVD case also fits comfortably in existing storage systems. Although this has significantly reduced the space necessary for a large collection of titles, for television releases, it still presents a considerable investment in space. For example, a complete run of a series at a rate of two to four episodes per disc could still result in dozens of cases.³⁰

The industry’s solution to this dilemma has been to further take advantage of DVD’s smaller dimensions, and structure television releases around the season rather than the individual episode. Programs are now released in this configuration as a box set, a single package containing several discs comprising an entire season. This practice, first effectively utilized by Fox with the release of *The X-Files: The Complete First Season* box set in May 2000, has reconfigured the perception and retail prospects of television on home video, effectively extending television from broadcast flow to publication.

The Box Set

Product design has long been a critical part of book and sound recording marketing, but it has only rarely been applied with as much attention to home video.³¹ The primary revenue stream for video throughout the 1980s and 1990s was the rental trade, where original packaging was, and

still is, most often replaced with a more anonymous plastic box. The shift to video sales (i.e., sell-through) prompted by DVD has necessitated a greater emphasis on packaging and overall design, enhancing the perceived value of an object meant for permanent ownership and display rather than temporary use. As Pierre Loubet, Warner Media Services' vice president of advanced media sales stated, "Since people are now buying these products instead of renting them, the packaging has to communicate the value of the movie's experience and the quality and the quantity of the material inside."³²

The *X-Files* box sets are landmarks of media design, successfully formatting an established brand into a new configuration. The seven discs in each set are arrayed in an unfolding stack of trays, thematically resonant with the series' signature labyrinthine narrative of government intrigue and unfathomable secrets. Images and quotations from the particular season are deployed around the trays and on the discs themselves in shadowy silvers and grays on a black background, adding additional layers of textuality for users to admire. The entire package is encased in a darkly reflective slipcover, with images of lead characters Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) from that particular season and a volume number on the spine. Thus, the set already functions as an aesthetic object before a disc is even played, as attractive as any well-designed hardback book and just as striking on the shelf.

This foregrounding of design extends to the *X-Files* discs' content, which was methodically prepared for optimum effect. In his review of the first set, Bill Hunt of The Digital Bits web site claimed he was "blown away at the quality of the image," which "puts the quality of the original network broadcasts to shame." He compares the discs' image quality to a particularly idealized exhibition space: "Unless you've visited a post production suite at Ten Thirteen Productions when one of the episodes was being edited, you've probably never seen *The X-Files* looking this good before."³³ While the image quality alone distinguishes these versions from both the earlier broadcast episodes and VHS releases, each set also includes the typical kinds of extras found on many DVD releases, including original promotional spots; audio commentary from producers, writers, and directors; and behind-the-scenes shorts. A twenty-minute overview of each season, *The Truth About Season One (Two, etc.)*, features new interviews with cast and crew as they recall that particular season; for example, much of *The Truth About Season Six* focuses on the effect of the production's move from Vancouver to Los Angeles in 1998. All of these features are available via evocative animated menus that end in an iconic freeze frame image from the episode chosen to view, uniting the themes introduced in the packaging and culminated in the program and additional features.

As they have with film releases, these extras add filters of meaning to the original episodes and function as significant texts on their own. Their inclusion further promotes the idea that a DVD set is better than the broadcast version, that it offers a more intensive experience than is available anywhere on television. Again, despite its reliance on the television set as an audiovisual display, home video has always been premised in large part on a marked distinction from television. To benefit from this perception, even popular television series like *The X-Files* must be distanced from the “stigma” of their broadcast roots. Indeed, while advertising is the very core of the flow model and the *raison d’être* for the institution of commercial television, it is precisely what is excised for a video release to “transcend” television. The box set functions as a multi-layered textual experience distinct from television and only obtainable via DVD.

While attention to design as a marker of distinction had already been prevalent in DVD releases of feature films, *The X-Files: The Complete First Season* was the first time this logic was applied to an entire television season, and ultimately, an entire series.³⁴ The box set approach set a high standard for television on home video, fostering the demand for more series to be released in this configuration. Accordingly, other distributors soon adopted it with similar success. By late 2001, it had become the standard method for releasing television series on DVD. The appendix lists key series released in this format from 2000 through 2003. All of the sets listed in the appendix utilized design elements pioneered by *The X-Files* box sets, including iconic packaging and menus, enhanced audiovisual fidelity (often incorporating widescreen aspect ratios and 5.1 channel sound), and the liberal inclusion of “special features.”

Critics have hailed the product design and content quality of these sets, but good design doesn’t guarantee good sales. The pricing and marketing of such extensive products had to be carefully considered. To test the market for television on home video and to assuage the anxieties of broadcast syndication divisions, distributors prioritized programs with particularly solid—if not necessarily “mass”—followings—the so-called cult audiences (in industry-speak) who had proven to be loyal consumers of licensed merchandise in the past. While loyalty to series television is certainly encouraged by the media industry, the term “cult” reveals an anxiety about potentially excessive loyalty. In the past, this kind of devotion has had very few sanctioned outlets in mainstream society, hence, the growth of active, grassroots fan subcultures around series ranging from *The Avengers* to *Xena: Warrior Princess* and the video collecting “underground” as described by Bjarkman (forthcoming). DVD has become a significant means to channel television fan engagement back to industry products via the definitive release of series in the box set configuration.

A&E was the first distributor to successfully gamble with a cult audience when it began releasing *The Avengers* on DVD in 1999 (albeit in episode collections—sold in individual discs or two-disc sets—rather than box sets). The initial acclaim and success of their Diana Rigg releases prompted them to release the series' remaining episodes, as well as its 1970s spin-off, *The New Avengers*. A&E has since issued several other "cult" titles, focusing primarily on other British imports, including *Monty Python's Flying Circus*, *The Prisoner*, *Secret Agent*, and several Gerry Anderson-produced science fiction series (e.g., *Captain Scarlet*, *Space: 1999*, *Thunderbirds*). With the exception of *Monty Python*, none of these series has had a high profile in the United States outside of esoteric fan circles. Indeed, most of them had had no extensive television exposure at all in this country. However, as borne out by A&E's successes with these titles, they do have just enough engaged fans to warrant carefully targeted DVD releases.³⁵

Like the often-cited "early adopters" of new high-tech products, fans can be counted on to purchase new DVDs, often as soon as they hit the market.³⁶ Many of these fans are also active Internet users; accordingly, web sites such as the Home Theater Forum, DVD File, and The Digital Bits have assumed a central role in channeling fan demands to the industry because such high-interest users are still the most loyal DVD consumers. DVD producers and studio video division representatives regularly read and participate in these forums, attempting to understand and cater to their most ardent market.³⁷ Even series that had previously been released on DVD as individual discs or in "best of" collections were reissued as season box sets after user demand was indicated.³⁸ Some distributors, including Paramount, Sony, and Warner Bros, even ran online polls to gauge which of their series should be released in DVD box sets, with what additional features, and at what price. For example, while Paramount began releasing the original *Star Trek* in individual discs (with two episodes per release) in 1999, it shifted its strategy to season box sets for the remaining series in the franchise when overwhelming user demand for the configuration was indicated in its polling.³⁹ As Michael Arkin, Paramount senior vice-president of marketing, stated at the time, "This is how consumers are expecting to get TV series on DVD."⁴⁰

Season box sets are typically priced between \$60 and \$100, although discounts of 20 percent to 40 percent are standard on online retailers like Amazon and DVD Planet. This is still a fairly significant investment relative to an individual feature film and is particularly so once an entire series is purchased; a complete collection of all nine *The X-Files* box sets would cost over \$1,000 at list price. However, it has apparently been a cost worth bearing for those interested in acquiring the definitive edition of their favorite television series. Indeed, despite their relatively high

cost, box sets have sold much better than VHS releases of television series ever did, if not at the same levels as the typical \$15 to \$20 film release. Season sets of *Friends*, *Sex and the City*, *The Simpsons*, *The Sopranos*, *Star Trek*, and *The X-Files* have been particularly successful, with each release selling hundreds of thousands of copies.⁴¹ Moreover, they are all widely available even in general retailers like Target and Wal-Mart, with a market presence television releases had never attained on VHS. As the table indicates, distributors have broadened their conception of viable video releases out from "cult" series and toward more mainstream programs like *CSI*, *ER*, and *Friends*; even *Seinfeld* is likely to have a DVD release in the near future.⁴² In only three years, DVD box sets of television series have become as expected as DVD releases of feature films.

The success of box sets has also apparently calmed the worries of television syndicators, most of which, thanks to the demise of the Financial Interest and Syndication rules in 1995, are now more firmly integrated into large horizontally and vertically integrated media corporations.⁴³ Rather than only function as draws for advertisers over broadcast or cable channels, television programs are now seen as multi-faceted properties that can spark several complimentary revenue streams. While Fox reportedly delayed the release of the first season box set of *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* (from September 2001 to January 2002) because of concerns about interference with its syndication debut, this issue seems to have dissipated since then.⁴⁴ Indeed, *Buffy* has thus far performed well in cable and local syndication and has sold extensively on DVD. Moreover, even ongoing series are now routinely prepared for DVD release prior to their rerun syndication, an inconceivable strategy in the VHS era. Paramount had no apparent qualms about releasing the first season of its ultrapopular *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* on DVD in March 2003, while Fox successfully promoted the new seasons of its "real time" thriller *24* through the release of box sets of the previous seasons (in September 2002 and September 2003), despite the fact that neither series had yet been made available for syndication. As Fox Home Entertainment senior Vice-President Peter Staddon stated, "People are seeing the backend value of DVD and that there's a real revenue stream there that doesn't have to impact syndication."⁴⁵ Each of these series already function well as synergistic cogs in the humming corporate machine, having run both on traditional broadcast networks and on cable networks owned by their parent corporations. Their release on home video adds to their public exposure, effectively promoting the series' next or current season. This practice is only feasible in an era when massive, horizontally and vertically integrated corporations control the media as they can take advantage of the synergistic opportunities offered by new technologies, new business practices, and new audience habits.

Conclusion: Television as Object

In the fall of 2002, Fox chairman Peter Chernin reportedly claimed that television on DVD had generated \$100 million of revenue for his studio.⁴⁶ If true, this figure is certainly large enough to indicate a significant shift in the relationship between television programming and home video. From an industrial perspective, it may have come just in time. As analyst Paul Sweeting of *Video Business* claimed, "DVD is becoming the new after-network market, filling the void left by a disintegrating syndication market."⁴⁷ There are limits to the industrial prerogatives of the flow model (not least of which being the twenty-four-hour day), and publishing television on DVD is clearly an effective strategy to make up for that deficit and expand into new markets. The television series box set is now an established media configuration and is likely to function similarly to the back catalog of a record label, as a collection of fixed recordings that can be easily reissued and reconfigured, corporate assets that can be repeatedly called forth into the market.

While this financial windfall for media corporations comes at the cost of further dents in consumers' wallets, avid viewers—including media scholars—also benefit from box sets. Programs can now be accessed completely at the whim of the viewer, without waiting for a rerun airing or searching through commercial breaks. Moreover, they can be accessed in their entirety (or "better"), with scenes long deleted for syndication added back in and images and sounds restored to a sharper glory.⁴⁸ While many people may still collect television on VHS as Bjarkman (forthcoming) describes, DVD box sets absorb much of the rationale. They present their series complete, uncut, organized, pristine, and compact, all qualities sought by VHS collectors. Moreover, they often contain features not available over the air, including materials produced by fans themselves.⁴⁹ In other words, DVD box sets provide the content of television without the "noise" and limitations of the institution of television.

Although these releases have been financially and culturally successful, they have also been faced with the greatest fears of the contemporary media industry: digital piracy. As the continued flowering of online file sharing (now larger than its Napster peak) indicates, computer hardware and software have greatly simplified the manufacturing and distribution of digital copies of audiovisual programs in recent years. Like music CDs, DVDs are prone to such copying, but it is a relatively difficult process, and their much larger file sizes (over four gigabytes of data per disc), high fidelity, and interactivity are not easily translated into other digital formats. More important, however, the successful marketing of DVDs as objects for acquisition has thus far reduced the effect of digital piracy on the film and television industries (at least in North America and Europe),

despite the indignant rhetoric of Jack Valenti and the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA.) By keeping the costs to consumers fairly low and by promoting the aesthetic qualities of the discs and packaging themselves, DVD distributors have reduced the benefits of illegal copying. However, the inevitable drop in the prices of DVD burners and blank media and the concomitant simplification of the duplication process will certainly insure that this issue is not entirely solved. There will always be ways around the “official” path of the publishing model.

Regardless of whether programming is purchased or pirated, it is still consumed and collected, aspects of our media experience that have not been adequately explored in media studies. People have long been regarded in media studies as “spectators,” “viewers,” and “audiences,” but much less so as “users,” “consumers,” and “collectors.” As the expansion of home video markets, the continued merging of media industries, and the significant technological changes of the early twenty-first century indicate, the latter categories are claiming precedence in industry rhetoric and everyday experience. Media is increasingly experienced not as fleeting moments but as consumer commodities and physical objects in domestic spaces. Films exist well beyond their theatrical screenings and television series beyond their initial broadcast runs as multivalent texts reissued, reconfigured, sampled, and collected in myriad ways across the culture.

In the wake of innovative cultural artifacts like *The X-Files* box sets, home video is a much more significant factor in the cultural lifetime of a television series, and the experience of popular culture in general, than it was only a few years ago. As the television of the twenty-first century takes shape, perhaps the DVD box set is the twentieth-century medium’s apotheosis. Perhaps the flow of television is not only measured in time but in physical commodities, as cultural objects placed in the permanent media collection alongside similarly mass-produced media artifacts (books, recordings, films on home video). Thus, as television as a technology and cultural form (to use Raymond Williams’s [1974] prescient description) continues to change, home video—also a technology and cultural form—should be further acknowledged and explored.

Appendix

Television Series Released in DVD Box Sets, 2000 to 2003

<i>Series</i>	<i>Distributor</i>
24	Fox
<i>Absolutely Fabulous</i>	BBC/Warner Bros
<i>Alias</i>	Buena Vista
<i>All In The Family</i>	Columbia Tri-Star

Appendix (continued)

Angel	Fox
Babylon 5	Warner Bros
Baretta	Universal
Blackadder	BBC/Warner Bros
Buffy The Vampire Slayer	Fox
Captain Scarlet and the Mysterons	A&E
Charlie's Angels	Columbia Tri-Star
Cheers	Paramount
C.S.I.	Paramount
Dark Angel	Fox
Dawson's Creek	Columbia Tri-Star
The Dead Zone	Lion's Gate
The Dick Van Dyke Show	Image
Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman	A&E
ER	Warner Bros
Family Guy	Fox
Felicity	Buena Vista
Frasier	Paramount
Friends	Warner Bros
Futurama	Fox
Good Times	Columbia Tri-Star
Highlander: The Series	Anchor Bay
Homicide: Life on the Street	A&E
The Jeffersons	Columbia Tri-Star
Joe 90	A&E
King of the Hill	Fox
La Femme Nikita	Warner Bros
The Larry Sanders Show	Columbia Tri-Star
Law & Order	Universal
Little House on the Prairie	Goldhil Home Media
Mad About You	Columbia Tri-Star
Malcolm In The Middle	Fox
The Mary Tyler Moore Show	Paramount
M*A*S*H	Fox
The Monkees	Rhino
My So-Called Life	BMG
NYPD Blue	Fox
Once And Again	Buena Vista
The Outer Limits	MGM
Oz	Warner Bros
Profiler	A&E
Queer As Folk	Paramount
Red Dwarf	BBC/Warner Bros
Sanford and Son	Warner Bros
Sapphire and Steel	A&E
Sex and the City	Warner Bros
The Shield	Fox
The Simpsons	Fox
Six Feet Under	Warner Bros
Soap	Columbia Tri-Star

Appendix (continued)

<i>Soul Food</i>	Paramount
<i>South Park</i>	Warner Bros
<i>The Sopranos</i>	Warner Bros
<i>Space: 1999</i>	A&E
<i>SportsNight</i>	Buena Vista
<i>Star Trek: The Next Generation</i>	Paramount
<i>Star Trek: Deep Space Nine</i>	Paramount
<i>Stingray</i>	A&E
<i>Supercar</i>	A&E
<i>Transformers</i>	Rhino
<i>Twin Peaks</i>	Artisan
<i>UFO</i>	A&E
<i>Upstairs Downstairs</i>	A&E
<i>Will & Grace</i>	NBC
<i>Xena: Warrior Princess</i>	Artisan
<i>The X-Files</i>	Fox
<i>Yes, Minister</i>	BBC/Warner Bros
<i>Yes, Prime Minister</i>	BBC/Warner Bros
<i>The Young Ones</i>	BBC/Warner Bros

Notes

1. I use the term *home video* to separate out dominant domestic applications of video technology from other functions, most notably in artworks and as surveillance tools. These latter forms have actually generated the bulk of critical thought on video technology since the early 1990s, while home video devices such as VCRs, camcorders, optical disk player/recorders, and (increasingly) home computers have been largely taken for granted.

2. *Program* here broadly refers to audiovisual material recorded onto tangible media. This is to contrast with two additional terms, each attached to particular ends of the home video experience. I use *product* to describe programs as commodities in the market, as favored by the media industry, while *text* is used to indicate the meaning(s) constructed out of a set of signs by viewers and audiences.

3. I do not wish to over-romanticize this dichotomy. While VCRs and personal video recorders (PVRs) enable viewers to adjust the broadcast schedule to a certain degree, this certainly does not mean they “resist” television in general. Indeed, the successful use of a VCR or any other video device depends in no small part on understanding and accepting the institution of television (e.g., in setting up to record a particular program at a particular time or waiting until your favorite program ends before playing the movie you rented). As Frederick Wasser (2001) explained, rather than put all the power in the hands of viewers, home video technology has enabled both the media industry and viewers more flexibility in achieving their different goals.

4. Some of the seminal works in this vein include Cubitt (1991), Dobrow (1990), and Gray (1992). Most recently, Frederick Wasser’s (2001) *Veni, Vidi, Video* has

offered the first in-depth academic history of home video's role in the U.S. film industry.

5. Disney purchased ABC in 1995, Viacom (already owners of UPN) picked up CBS in 2000, and NBC announced plans to merge with Universal in 2003; Fox and the WB have always been subsidiaries of major media giants.

6. See Miège (1989).

7. See Wasser (2001, 132-84).

8. Statistics are taken from "Home Video Industry" (2003).

9. See Meehan (1990, 117-37).

10. Raymond Williams (1974, 95).

11. Examples include novelizations, comic books, posters, toys, soundtracks, and T-shirts.

12. See Wasser (2001, 71-80).

13. While this was a major concern of advertisers, studios, and broadcasters early on and was presented as such in legal challenges to home video, the courts were not convinced that timeshifting produced significant harm to the flow industries. However, the more integrated and prominent timeshifting functions of PVRs have recently revived this concern (see Wasser 2001, 82-91, on the concern over timeshifting in the 1970s and 1980s). The tension between advertisers and PVR technology is covered in many trade and lay publications of the early 2000s. For highlights of this debate, see Bond 2002; Chunovic 2002, 8; Elkin 2002, 55; Edmunds 2001, 1; "PVR Feared in Home Entertainment" 2001; Ostrow 2002, 9; Ross 2001, 1; Summerfield 2002, 1.

14. See Bjarkman (forthcoming).

15. For example, new episodes of the NBC series *Law and Order: Criminal Intent* (2001 to present) currently also run on the cable network USA, albeit several days after their NBC debut. The USA series *Monk* actually reversed this scenario, as episodes of its first season (Summer 2002) were repeated a few weeks later on ABC.

16. See Kompare (1999).

17. Blockbuster Video's name and logo (an iconic movie ticket) suggests a cinematic experience, while one of the other top video chains in the United States is actually named Hollywood Video.

18. See Frank (1999).

19. Almost all of these series were generally regarded as having loyal "cult" audiences, a factor that would be successfully reproduced and expanded with DVD. Paramount's *Star Trek* was the most prominent release of this nature, as all 257 episodes of the original series (1966 to 69) and its sequel, *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (1987 to 94), were released on VHS by the end of the 1990s.

20. See Winston (1998, 2).

21. According to estimates from the Consumer Electronics Association, U.S. per capita expenditure on consumer electronics (and related accessories) grew tenfold between 1980 and 1998, from \$100 to \$1,000 annually.

22. Kieran Kelly (2003) explored the idea of the "good enough" in media technology, culture, and economics in *Digital Convergence: Dead, Dying, or Delayed?*

23. See "DVD Software Sales Drive Video Industry to Record Breaking \$20 Billion Year" (2003).

24. By contrast, the LP-like dimensions and attributes of laserdisc (including the necessity to “flip sides” to experience its whole program) seemed to point to the past rather than the future; the format failed to attract 95 percent of the U.S. home video market.

25. Aside from the enhanced navigation interface (i.e., menus) and larger storage capacity, the look, sound, and features of DVD are virtually identical to its digital predecessor, laserdisc. However, laserdisc never reached more than 5 percent of U.S. households. Once hardware manufacturers and software distributors started to shift production to DVD, laserdisc’s fate was sealed. Although Pioneer has continued to sell a combination laserdisc-DVD player, the format officially became obsolete at the end of 1999, when the last laserdiscs were pressed.

26. These features may also actively favor particular interpretations over others, as Robert Alan Brookey and Robert Westerfelhaus (2002) argue in “Hiding Homoeroticism in Plain View: The Fight Club DVD as Digital Closet.”

27. “Day-and-date” pricing negates the quasiexclusive window that video rental stores enjoyed during the VHS era. While new VHS titles would be released at higher rental prices first, which were then lowered several months later, DVDs are released with only one pricing window for both retail and rental (see Olson 2003; Sporich 2002).

28. For investigation of the spatial relationships between television, domesticity, and public space and discourse, see McCarthy (2001) and Spigel (2001).

29. See Bjarkman (forthcoming).

30. For example, the DVD release of *I Spy* has twenty-five volumes, the original *Star Trek* forty, and *The Twilight Zone* forty-four.

31. Special edition laserdiscs, usually necessitating three or four discs, were often packaged in somewhat portentous layers of boxes and sleeves, while occasional “collector’s edition” VHS releases would come packaged with an extra tape or book, or in the case of a 1997 special release of *Fargo*, a snowglobe.

32. Quoted in Daniel Frankel (2002, 8).

33. See Bill Hunt (2000).

34. The remaining eight seasons of *The X-Files* have since been released in box sets every six months, with *The Complete Seasons Eight* and *Nine* due to finish the series in November 2003 and May 2004, respectively.

35. See David Bianculli (2002, 35).

36. Most online DVD retailers also promote and measure preorders as soon as release dates are announced, enabling particularly ardent fans to purchase DVDs before they hit the market.

37. Indeed, the amount and frequency of contact between producers and users on these sites is a rare (though not unique) example of two-way interaction in mainstream textual production, a practice also worthy of further investigation (for more discussion of this phenomenon in contemporary media production, see Kurt Lancaster 2001).

38. For example, both *Friends* and *South Park* were released in season box sets (beginning in 2002) after their “best of” collections, which sold well (over one million copies each), were criticized by fans for being too incomplete (see Arnold 2002, 3D; Clark 2002, 20).

39. See Frankel (2002, 4) and Hunt (2001).
40. Quoted in Pesselnick (2002, 72).
41. See Larsen (2002, J5) and Spielvogel (2001, 24).
42. See Hettrick (2003, 6).
43. The rules, put in place in 1970, banned the networks from ownership and syndication of prime-time programming (with a few exceptions). The rules were gradually eroded and then abandoned by the mid-1990s, enabling networks to own and syndicate programs again.
44. See Perigard (2002, 43).
45. Quoted in Adalian (2002, 1).
46. See Sweeting (2002, 12).
47. See Sweeting (2002, 12).
48. Although many DVD box sets have not presented such attention to fidelity, most have also promoted these efforts in their advertising. For example, the *Babylon 5* box sets restored the series to the widescreen aspect ratio it was originally shot in (instead of the traditional 4:3 ratio that it actually aired in) and include all episode promos. The DVD releases of the BBC series *Doctor Who* have featured an unprecedented degree of audiovisual reconstruction, to the point of digitally converting kinescopes of 1960s episodes back to their original videotape look.
49. For example, Artisan's release of the first season of *Twin Peaks* contains an extensive interview with the editors of the fanzine *Wrapped In Plastic*.

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