

## **Make them wait! Why the age of bingewatching may finally be over**

5 Disney's new streaming service will release episodes once a week, rather than in one go, bringing an end to Netflix's exhausting all-you-can-eat model.

Disney+ doesn't launch for another two months, but it is proving exhausting already. We are exhausted by the prospect of signing up to yet another subscription service. We are exhausted by the punishing promises of franchises being run even further into the dirt in the form of sequels, spinoffs and series. We are exhausted and baffled and defeated by the trailer for The World According to Jeff Goldblum.

15 However, as much as it resembles the smiling face of cultural monopoly, Disney+ does have one thing going for it. According to reports from Disney's D23 conference, it will release new episodes of its shows weekly. The Mandalorian will play out across eight weeks. The Loki series will run over six. In an age when consumers are used to being given everything they want at once, Disney+ is bringing back the lost art of patience – and it can't come soon enough.

20 The Netflix model of bulk-releasing seasons was a fun novelty at first, but there are signs that people are growing tired of it – especially people who like talking about television. The amount of eggshell-walking it has created – with people tiptoeing around juicy plotlines for fear of spoiling things for their busier friends – has become absurd. The recap ecosystem has suffered, too. How do you cover a show that arrives in one piece? Do you burn through several episodes a day with little time for decent reflection, as the AV Club did recently with Glow? Or do you take your time and give proper attention to one episode a week, even though the show will be a distant memory for most viewers once you have crawled to the finale? It is a minefield.

30 Similarly, what is the maximum amount of buzz that a new Netflix show receives these days? A week? Three days? The final series of Orange Is the New Black – consistently named Netflix's best original programme – should have been a major publicity-grabber. Instead, the whole thing dropped at once and was buried by Glow the following week, which in turn was buried by Mindhunter. We have been trained to salivate over the hot new thing at the expense of all else, even if what came before is only a matter of days old.

35 Furthermore, the biggest success stories of recent times have been released weekly. Game of Thrones took its time, with each new episode dominating the cultural conversation (for better or worse) more than the last. Bodyguard

40 hinged on suspending incredible tension across several weeks in a manner  
that wouldn't have worked if it had been dumped at once. Even something as  
everyday in its subject matter as *Fleabag* snowballed as it continued, with  
each episode drawing a more breathless reaction than the last.

45 This has to be the main reason why Disney+ will keep things weekly. It is a  
clever way to maintain a stranglehold on culture. While this approach is  
bound to be more successful for some shows than others – you can expect  
suffocating global hype around the Marvel series, whereas anyone who recaps  
*The World According to Jeff Goldblum* can expect a swift kick in the pants – it  
is a sign that Disney+ won't rest until it has become the world's most dominant  
streaming platform.

50 There may be another, finance-driven reason for the weekly drop – good luck  
watching a full two-month season of *The Mandalorian* with your free trial,  
suckers – but it seems as though the key goal is becoming unavoidable.

55 That said, this isn't a uniformly popular choice. A recent poll by IGN found  
that 69% of respondents preferred to consume content all at once rather than  
weekly. But I am convinced it is a step in the right direction. If it works, other  
platforms may start experimenting further. The streaming platform Quibi is  
planning to release a horror series by Stephen Spielberg that can only be  
watched when it is dark outside, so who knows what is next. A show that  
broadcasts each episode only once, at a predetermined time each week? Talk  
60 about futuristic.

**Stuart Heritage**  
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