

I don't watch television anymore. I'm not sure precisely when I stopped, but it was probably within months of November 25, 2001, the day I brought my first DVR home. To be sure, I do, presently, watch *Friday Night Lights*, *How I Met Your Mother*, *Weeds*, and *The Shield*, to name but a few of the television shows that I view. But now I watch shows. Whether recorded or live, my viewing is purposeful and deliberate. I never sit down to watch TV or see what's on, and channel-surfing has been replaced by processes of evaluating my DVR line-up and painstaking decisions regarding what to delete when I have more shows to watch than time to view.

Of course I still believe these shows are television (no HBO, cultural capital enforcing, marketing mumbo jumbo intended here). What I mean to point out is one of many shifts in the rituals of television use that are occurring alongside the extensions of television content, platforms, audiences, places...that we are to discuss in Boston.

In her introduction of *Television after TV: Essays on a Medium in Transition*, Lynn Spigel offers a helpful list of factors that determine the boundaries of television, a topic we never thought much about because they seemed so obvious. She writes, "Indeed, if TV refers to the technologies, industrial formations, government policies, and practices of looking that were associated with the medium in its classical public service and three-network age, it appears we are now entering a new phase of television."⁵ Of these four factors (technologies, industrial formations, government policies, and practices of looking), the new technological parameters of television are clear--including an array of new screens for viewing television and devices that allow us to control our content and move it among these screens. The industrial formations are in varying degrees of transition. Distribution, production, and financing are all experimenting with new practices, although in most cases the new norm--if there will be new norms to the degree common of the past--have yet to be determined. Governmental policies arguably show the least evolution. The lack of change in this area could be its own topic, but for the purposes of this piece, the point is to note the minimal change in this determinant. Finally, practices of looking are linked to the first two determinants in a veritable chicken or the egg contest. The new technologies exist and allow for new practices of looking, although new practices of looking remain constrained by the slow evolution of industrial practices. (Or, if industry decision makers had a better sense of what the new practices of looking would be, they'd be able to more quickly adjust their practices).

My opening anecdote illustrates one of many changes in practices of looking that are redefining television, and I point to practices of looking as an area in need of further research, attention, and theory building. From my own use and patterns of viewing, I know that considerable discrepancies exist in the personal meaning of the television that I view on my obscenely large HDTV, that viewed on my more utilitarian set, that viewed on my computer, and that viewed on a portable device. In the same way that I no longer watch television, we can no longer think of content viewed on these screens as interchangeable--even if it is arguably all still "television" and might even be precisely the same show.