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Sophie G. Einwächter & Thessa Jensen

Researching Series Fatigue
A Data and Methodology Paper

ABSTRACT

This data paper describes the data and methodology behind a collaborative and exploratory study from 2023–2024 that addresses the phenomenon of 'serial fatigue,' which appears to arise from the abundant availability of serial media content on the internet. The data paper complements the scientific article that emerged from this study and was published in *Fandom | Cultures | Research* (1/2024) and provides a detailed description of the dataset published via the media/rep/ data repository.

   The paper traces the course of the study, from its initial conceptualization to various phases of the research process, from data collection and coding to considerations of the data's longevity. Furthermore, the paper highlights the study's limitations, such as the homogeneity of the sample, but also addresses its advantages, such as rich, qualitative insights into contemporary media consumption. It also describes the challenges of data management across countries.

   Aiming to facilitate the sharing of data, reusability and transparency in research, the paper is intended to serve as a bridge between the raw data in the dataset (questionnaire, preliminary coding table, final codebook with code descriptions and examples, survey responses and interview transcripts, informed consent) and the broader research community.

AUTHORS

Sophie G. Einwächter, PhD, is a media studies scholar currently working at Philipps-Universität Marburg, Germany. She is co-editor of the journals Demokratie gegen Menschenfeindlichkeit *and* Fandom | Cultures | Research*. Her work concentrates on fan and scholarly cultures, questions of openness in academia, as well as on online communities, and web-based ethnography.*
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0851-8379

Thessa Jensen, PhD, is an Associate Professor in Communication and Psychology at Aalborg University, Denmark. Her research spans participatory culture, collaborative creativity on digital platforms, and the influence of design on social interaction within these environments. Her research on fandom studies explores innovative approaches to storytelling, emphasizing how digital and cultural practices shape media engagement and audience participation.
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5882-9853

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Introduction

Between 2023 and 2024, an international collaborative study was conducted by Sophie Einwächter (Philipps-Universität Marburg, Germany) and Thessa Jensen (Aalborg Universitet, Denmark). The qualitative study aimed to explore 'series fatigue,' a seemingly novel phenomenon arising from the abundant availability of serial media content online. It had all started with Einwächter hearing the sentence 'I do not watch series anymore' in a couple of conversations with friends, family members, and colleagues. They had all hinted at the fact that they had had several unpleasant experiences with series getting canceled prematurely or going on for too many seasons for their liking, or with too many periods of waiting in between seasons, which had seemed to sour the experience of watching for them. Furthermore, in her earlier research about fragmentary series (cf. Einwächter/Cuntz-Leng 2020) Einwächter had come across several reports online, in which people complained about the number of available series online, indicating that the sheer number of available series left them feeling paralyzed and unable to choose (cf. e.g., Rosenberger 2019). In her article with the telling name "The End of 'Peak TV' Must Finally, Mercifully Be Nigh" (2019), business journalist Ashley Rodriguez quoted a global strategy consultant referring to the same problem: "For a lot of consumers, there's so much stuff they need to watch it's sort of like homework."

Over the following years similar reports kept appearing. In a 2022 online commentary, technology reporter Abrar Al-Heeti, for example, states feeling overwhelmed by series and by keeping up with the public discourse about them: „just when I feel caught up on the latest craze, another show captures our collective attention. If I want to keep up, I need to dedicate several more hours to binging that show, too. Usually, the time commitment doesn't feel worth it" (Al-Heeti 2022). Media journalist Esperanza Miyake states, quite similarly: "Some are sick of the stress of binge-watching. For others, it has become yet another digital task to be endured as they succumb to the online world of peer pressure, fear of missing out (FOMO), fear of spoilers and aggressive targeted advertising – all of which enforce a universal fast pace for TV-watching" (Miyake 2021). First research into a wider audience's experiences led Einwächter to online message boards, where the term 'series fatigue' circulated in numerous contexts (e.g., in the context of literature, where people were tired of the length of some book series, but also in contexts of television and streaming series).[1] Assuming from these first explorations, that there were several negative

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1 See for example users asking on Reddit: "What to do about Series Fatigue" (https://www.reddit.com/r/books/comments/vwmd18/what_to_do_about_series_fatigue/?rdt=34387) or generally about 'series fatigue' (https://www.reddit.com/r/fantasyromance/comments/1b0slmv/series_fatigue/), both discussing book series. See also discussions about TV and platform-based serial content, e.g., "Series fatigue in television" (https://www.reddit.com/r/unpopularopinion/comments/r1562o/season_fatigue_in_television/) or "Anyone else having streaming services fatigue?" (https://www.reddit.com/r/netflix/comments/nelcl5/anyone_else_having_streaming_services_fatigue/), all accessed on Nov. 6, 2024.

attitudes towards series that might be subsumed under the term 'series fatigue,' the study sought to gain a better understanding of it. It set out to understand how individuals navigate the vast array of available series online, make decisions about serial media consumption, and to identify factors contributing to negative judgments about series, like stress, exhaustion, disorientation, or dissatisfaction with series.

The project originated in 2023 at Philipps Universität Marburg, Germany, under Einwächter's leadership, who recruited a first sample of informants via the mailing list of the Participation and Fan Studies Workgroup of the German Society for Media Studies, which has members from Germany, the Netherlands, Great Britain, Denmark, Poland, Austria, and Switzerland. Several scholars from different career levels and national backgrounds responded, among them Jensen, who first joined the project as a volunteer informant. Although a focus group interview via conference call had been prepared, the majority of the first group of informants only participated via email. However, a prolonged individual online interview between Einwächter and Jensen had the positive outcome, that Jensen offered to recruit participants for the study and discussed the topic with her students, some of whom mentioned that the topic resonated strongly with them as they were affected by it. At a later point, Jensen joined the study as a researcher, conducting her own focus groups and individual interviews.

While more detailed results of the research process with literature overview and more in-depth analysis are published in the shape of a separate and peer-reviewed article, this publication is a data and methodology paper (for the article and analysis see Einwächter/Jensen: "Exploring Viewers' Experiences of 'Series Fatigue.'" In: *Fandom | Cultures | Research* 1 [1], 2024, pp.106-122). It has a methodological focus and describes the research process, collecting and archiving of data. The data discussed here have been linked to this paper as they have been stored and made available via the Open Access data repository media/rep/ and can be accessed via the DOI http://dx.doi.org/10.25969/mediarep/23243. Both this data paper and the published data set are meant to a) be of further use to other researchers and b) help early career researchers from cultural and media studies gain insight into the chances and limitations of an exploratory and qualitative research process. We are very open to criticism and suggestions for further research, as well as to cooperation with scholars doing research on similar topics.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative, exploratory approach that focuses on spectators' negative responses to series. The concentration on a single key question (*What makes people feel tired of watching series and what do they do about it?*) and further procedures in this first exploration were based on the grounded theory approach (cf. Glaser/Strauss 1965; 1967); the study was about initial stocktaking, not about the verification of any hypotheses. While its main interest was to gain insight into the nature of spectators' negative feelings as well as their criticism towards serial media products, the study's conductors also suspected that an inquiry into this topical domain might provide fruitful insight into contemporary media culture and how recipients deal with problematic aspects of it.

Sampling and limitations

In total, the international collaborative sample comprises 14 interviewees distributed across three mini focus groups (with three or two informants each), two face-to-face interviews, one online interview, and four filled-in email questionnaires (plus one filled-in by the questionnaire designer, Einwächter, for testing purposes). Details of the interviews can be found in Table 1 (pp.128f.).

The 14 participants were purposefully selected by means of an invitation that stressed a single criterion: that they watched or had watched series regularly and felt addressed by the term 'series fatigue' in one way or another. Because of Jensen's and Einwächter's background in media studies and fan studies, where series consumption plays a major role, it was easy to get access to informants who were familiar with watching series on a regular basis. This aspect, of course, also represents a major limitation of the sample because only a rather highly educated group with a keen professional interest in media was interviewed. Future studies of this topic should aim to expand this first, limited sample to be more inclusive towards non-academic groups that may have more leisure-oriented viewing practices and also towards other nationalities and other age groups (the sample represents people between 20 and 60 years of age). Consequently, this sample constitutes a non-probability, convenience sample (cf. Bryman 2016) as the authors directly accessed participants through teaching, research, and professional networks (cf. Bryman 2016). This study remains qualitative, exploratory, and non-representational. While we acknowledge its limitations, convenience sampling remains a straightforward method for gathering initial data in a project (cf. Sedgwick 2013; Emerson 2015).

Although the sample may look homogenous regarding the high educational status–participants possessed varying levels of media studies experience, including bachelor's, master's or doctoral degrees with considerable research involvement–our group of informants appears relatively heterogenous with regard to other aspects. The pool of participants included informants from Denmark, Germany, and Brazil–countries that the authors of this paper consider underrepresented in fan studies. Participants identify as male, female, or non-binary, and their marital status ranges from single to married or living with a partner. The participants' sustained engagement with series played diverse roles, serving as recreational content, research material, or both. Additionally, the contexts of reception (individual, couple, family, or friends) varied. Furthermore, the participants exhibited diverse attitudes and behaviors related to series consumption, and only a few of them identified as aca-fans, which is not a very common label in German or Danish academic contexts (especially in German media studies people separate their fan identity very much from their scholarly work; fan studies as a 'proper' field of research is not as established here, as in the UK or in the USA). Although the sample lacks statistical validity, it offers valuable insights into contemporary streaming series viewership and its related problems.

Email interviews

Einwächter had designed a preliminary 13-questions long questionnaire, which was first filled in by two informants and by herself (as a test run, but also to have some kind of documentation of her own experiences with the subject). After a long, virtual interview with Jensen, based on that questionnaire, Einwächter added four more questions to it that had appeared relevant after the interview session. Thus, not only the later coding but also the early stage of building a set of relevant questions was inductive in nature, always reacting to the material. Later, another two informants filled in the now extended questionnaire, and Einwächter handed it over to Jensen, so she could use it as a guideline for her interviews.

Conference call interview (GER/DK)

One 1.5-hour interview took place, in which Einwächter interviewed Jensen. Designed as a focus group call, from which two participants dropped out due to technical and health issues, the conversation was

planned and carried out via the GDPR-approved video conference tool DFNconf by the German research network (DFN/Deutsches Forschungsnetz). Here, any recorded video material gets stored only in the researcher's password-protected space, for a duration of two weeks, after which it will be deleted automatically. Einwächter converted the resulting video file to audio, deleted her copy of the video, and then handed the audio over to her research assistants for transcription. A transcription with both language versions (German original and translated English version) side-by-side can be found in the data set that is linked to this paper.

Mini focus groups (face-2-face)

The composition of focus groups was determined by the informants–students and colleagues of Jensen's from Aalborg Universitet. One group consisted of three individuals collaborating on their seventh-term paper, while another comprised two males working on their master's thesis. The third mini focus group consisted of two female students who were friends. While larger groups will surely produce more relevant information, we found the mini size rather helpful, because even in mini groups large numbers of series titles were discussed. We assume that with a larger focus group it may become more difficult for the interviewer to follow (because they cannot possibly know all the serial content that people refer to) and accordingly also to ask relevant follow-up questions. One of the possible pitfalls of the topic is the danger to get lost in plot narration, which may be less frustrating with fewer participants. The face-to-face interviews took place in Jensen's office, utilizing a microphone and laptop for recording. While one focus group was conducted in English, the others were in Danish. Transcription of Jensen's interviews was carried out using the GDPR-approved program My Good Tape (https://goodtape.io/about), which employs generative artificial intelligence originally developed for journalists at the Danish journal *Zetland*. Here, data remain fully encrypted on servers in the European Union and get promptly deleted after transcription. Following the initial transcription, Jensen edited the interviews for accuracy and clarity. Details of all other documents in the data set (questionnaire, informed consent form, coding chart and codebook) can be found in Table 2 (p.129).

Ethical considerations and informed consent

The media studies department at Einwächter's university, where the study originated, does not work with an ethics committee. However, anonymization of personal information and pseudonymization of interviewee's names became a priority although the topic of the study was not considered very sensitive. Each interviewee provided informed consent by signing a consent form. The authors received detailed permission to work with, anonymize, and share the interviews and surveys (see Informed Consent form in data set). Transcriptions were carefully edited to remove personally identifiable information. While the survey was conducted via email, no other online data collection occurred in these cases, only the email addresses of the participants were kept, because they all declared that they would like to be contacted with results. The consent form outlined data usage, storage, and the informants' rights to object or gain access, following the Ethical Guidelines 3.0 of the Association of Internet Researchers (cf. Franzke et al. 2020). Given the cross-cultural nature of this research design, the authors addressed context, culture, and potential misunderstandings during their shared discussions of the transcripts. As a result, many automatically translated sections were revised to clarify context, while others were omitted due to personal information or cultural specificity, indicated as "[…]". All participants first received the final

transcript and translation and, then again, signed informed consent to publish the data. Some gave feedback, if they preferred a different translation of a passage, which was incorporated accordingly.

Though we do not consider the interviews to contain sensitive information, there are aspects we would like to highlight to their readers as possible limitations and disclaimer: First, the interviews did not originate as forms of public speech. Although all informants agreed for their interviews to be published in Open Access, they did not have a larger audience in mind when speaking (or filling in the questionnaire), and thus may have said things they might slightly rephrase or explain in more detail in a different situation. Three participants provided their answers in English although they were not native speakers. The interviews contain a lot of colloquial language and some linguistic inconsistencies, and there may be meanings that could be misunderstood or misinterpreted when out of context. This, however, is also why we consider it productive to publish the interviews alongside the codebook and examples, so individual quotes can be read up in their original contexts. Furthermore, some idiomatic characteristics of the languages used (especially German and Danish) may have made it into the translated English version despite all efforts to present a comprehensible English text.

Spoiler alert

We would like to alert people interested in films and series to the fact, that the interviews contain SPOILERS which have not been marked. We consider spoiler warnings a practice from fan culture rather than from scholarly culture, but hereby at least try to bridge the two realms: As our interviewees focused on frustrating aspects of series, the spoilers in their answers may contain information about major character deaths, reveal the ending of a series or film, etc. Whereas spoilers will appear in the full interviews, the file at hand, as well as the Codebook, should be spoiler-free.

Questionnaire and interview guide

The original questionnaire can be found in file 1 of the published data set. During the Danish interviews, the questionnaire served as an interview guide, facilitating discussions about how participants watched streaming series or TV. These interviews followed a semi-structured format, allowing flexibility while adhering to the questionnaire's key points (cf. Bryman 2016).

Coding process

In qualitative research, the coding process plays a pivotal role in uncovering meaningful insights from textual or visual data. Basically, two types of codes are present in the research (cf. Cash/Snider 2014). Firstly, manifest codes relating directly to observable statements or surface-level content. They capture explicit information without extensive interpretation. Examples include details about participants' TV series preferences, viewing habits, and straightforward observations. Secondly, there are latent codes that go beyond the surface layer. They require deeper exploration and interpretation as they reveal underlying meanings and emotions. For instance, statements about participants' feelings may be coded as both negative and positive, dependent on the context. Likewise, cultural differences and translational nuances can impact coding, which we had to address in our discussions and subsequent coding. These discussions were part of the hermeneutical process, in which we considered context, cultural nuances, and theoretical frameworks.

what/why	how/by whom	when	comments
Self-interview with original questionnaire/to test relevance and to contribute own experience	via original Word-docx-questionnaire with 13 questions/Einwächter	Mar. 10, 2023	Helpful tool to prepare for the conference call interview
E-mail-interview with Martha/to gain insight into her understanding of series fatigue	via original Word-docx-questionnaire with 13 questions/Einwächter	Sent: Mar. 10, 2023 Received: Mar. 12, 2023	Martha sent email with filled-in questionnaire and consent to use her name. Extended and final consent form for usage of full interview in FCR-data paper was received: Jun. 19, 2024
E-mail-interview with Victoria/to gain insight into her understanding of series fatigue	via original Word-docx-questionnaire with 13 questions/Einwächter	Sent: Mar. 10, 2023 Received: Mar. 13, 2023	Victoria sent email with filled-in questionnaire and consent to use her name. Extended and final consent form for usage of full interview in FCR-data paper was received: Jun. 18, 2024
Video conference-based interview with Thessa Jensen/to gain insight into her understanding of series fatigue	Via DFNconf-Tool (safe connection and temporary data storage provided by Deutsches Forschungsnetz)/ guided by original Word-docx-questionnaire with 13 questions/Einwächter	Mar. 16, 2023 09:00-10:30 am	Questionnaire was sent in advance, to allow some time to prepare/think. Consent form (for focus group interview) received: Feb. 27, 2023 Interview was planned as focus group interview with 4 participants, but one participant was ill and the other could not establish a connection from another country, so the interview turned out to be just between TJ and SGE, while the other two informants were sent an adapted, slightly longer questionnaire after this interview, which had brought new aspects to the fore. Both TJ and SGE do not need to provide explicit consent for the usage of their data in this study, as they are responsible for this study and its data management.
E-mail-interview with Peter/to gain insight into his understanding of series fatigue	via adapted Word-docx-questionnaire with 17 questions/Einwächter	Sent: Mar. 16, 2023 Received: Mar. 22, 2023	Participant received adapted questionnaire with four new, additional questions that resulted from previous interviews. Peter sent email with filled-in questionnaire in 2023. Extended and final consent form for usage of full interview in FCR-data paper was received: Jun. 18, 2024
E-mail-interview with Jennifer/to gain insight into her understanding of series fatigue	via adapted Word-docx-questionnaire with 17 questions/Einwächter	Sent: Mar. 29, 2023 Received: Apr. 5, 2023	Participant received adapted questionnaire with four new, additional questions that resulted from previous interviews. Jennifer sent email with filled-in questionnaire in 2023. Extended and final consent form for usage of full interview in FCR-data paper was sent/received: Jun. 27, 2024
Focus group with Viggo, Saga, and Erik/to gain insight into their understanding of series fatigue	Face-to-face/Jensen	Aalborg, Denmark, Mar. 20, 2023	The final questionnaire was used as a guideline for the interview Extended and final consent form for usage of full interview in FCR-data paper was sent/received: Viggo: Jun. 24, 2024, Saga: Jul. 28, 2024, Erik: Jun. 22, 2024

what/why	how/by whom	when	comments
Focus group with Emil and Magnus/to gain insight into their understanding of series fatigue	Face-to-face/Jensen	Aalborg, Denmark Mar. 20, 2023	The final questionnaire was used as a guideline for the interview Extended and final consent form for usage of full interview in FCR-data paper was sent/received: Emil: Jun. 25, 2024, Magnus: Jun. 21, 2024
Focus group with Alma and Ellie/to gain insight into their understanding of series fatigue Interview-file also contains a screenshot of Alma's mobile phone showing a watchlist	Face-to-face/Jensen	Aalborg, Denmark 26.09.2023	The final questionnaire was used as a guideline for the interview Extended and final consent form for usage of full interview in FCR-data paper was sent/received: Alma: 26.06.2024 Ellie: 28.06.2024
Interview with Kim/to gain insight into their understanding of series fatigue	Face-to-face/Jensen	Aalborg, Denmark Oct. 3, 2023	The final questionnaire from Sophie's exploratory email interviews was used as a guideline. Extended and final consent form for usage of full interview in FCR-data paper was sent/received: Jun. 25, 2024
Interview with William/to gain insight into his understanding of series fatigue	Face-to-face/Jensen	Aalborg, Denmark Sep. 26, 2023	The final questionnaire was used as a guideline for the interview Extended and final consent form for usage of full interview in FCR-data paper was sent/received: Jun. 21, 2024

Table 1: Overview of conducted interviews

what/why	how/by whom	when	comments
Survey/questionnaire (short & long version)	Design based on early observations and research done for Einwächter/Cuntz-Leng 2021, and adapted based on input from first usage/Einwächter	Feb./Mar. 2023	May be of use for further interviews (e.g., when sample gets extended/diversified)
Preliminary Thematic Coding Chart	Thematic coding into need-based categories: lack vs. abundance; coping strategies, relevant contexts/Einwächter	Summer of 2023	Helpful first overview of the main problems people have with series, as well as insight into their ways to cope or adapt.
Final Codebook with Codes, descriptions, and examples	Inductive, expanding coding in NVivo 14, re-arrangement of codes in corresponding coding sessions/Einwächter and Jensen	Jun. 2024	Different structure than the one used in the earlier categorization charts, but still influenced by the first coding and categorization process.
Consent form	Adapted from an earlier, similar consent form designed by Einwächter	Final version: Jun. 2024	May be a helpful template for other projects

Table 2: Overview of further documents and data

First coding (manually, individually)

An initial, non-software-supported coding process was carried out by Einwächter, who identified themes that occurred in clusters and that seemed to have particular relevance with regard to the phenomenon of 'series fatigue.' An important observation was, that most of the informants' critical statements could be assigned to two categories, namely either a **perceived lack** ('too little') of something or an **excess** ('too much') of something, which the interviewees complained about in each case. Lack and excess were usually mutually dependent: for example, the interviewees commented on a perceived excess of available media material on streaming platforms as well as complained about a lack of available time for reception. Too much patronizing behavior from producers or platforms was at the same time perceived as representing too little respect for the customer. As a third category within this first categorization process the concrete **ways of dealing with the criticized situations** were noted, as the interviewees had each developed a number of strategies to adapt to the often difficult reception situations—e.g., to be more selective when choosing serial products, to only watch completed series (such as mini-series), or to postpone watching until a series was available in its completed form. In a fourth category, all relevant remarks concerning **media and technological contexts** were noted.

As this coding process had been carried out manually, it was eventually replaced by a software-supported procedure–motivated by the increasing amount of material in the form of several long interviews and by Jensen joining the project. However, the original overview from the manual coding process became the basis for the first software-supported coding, in which many of the original observations were included. We consider it relevant as a first step of categorizing the material, which is why—although preliminary in nature—we added it to the data set corresponding with this publication (see Preliminary Coding Chart in data set, also detailed in Table 2, p.129).

Second coding (software-assisted, individual and collaborative)

A second coding process commenced using the qualitative data software Nvivo. Jensen's university provided free access to the software for its members, and Einwächter initially utilized a trial version before eventually purchasing it. The program facilitated the inclusion of all anonymized interview files into a project, where they were coded using a hierarchical structure of parent and child codes. Unfortunately, achieving this level of organization had not been possible with non-proprietary software. Additionally, Nvivo allowed for easy re-sorting of codes (via drag and drop) and provided an overview of all passages associated with each code, streamlining subsequent joint coding sessions (cf. Silver/Lewins 2023).

Initially, we independently conducted the coding process for our respective interviews. Einwächter initiated the coding with her interviews and collaborated with Jensen to create an initial codebook during the early research phase. Jensen then adapted this codebook for her interviews. Subsequently, we synchronized our coding efforts through two digital sessions, where we merged or subdivided codes based on the interview material. As we approached the penultimate coded interview, we reached a saturation point, and the list of codes appeared comprehensive (cf. Saunders et al. 2018). In a final joint coding session, we reviewed each individual code, examining all assignments associated with each parent and child codes.

During the coding process, we encountered overlapping content. For instance, we initially had a parent code called "Consequences for reception," which included sub-items like "Interrupting viewing," "Aborting viewing," and "Selectivity." However, we realized that these consequences were already covered by

another parent code, "Coping Mechanisms." Since the interviewees had described these consequences as outcomes of their actions, we decided to merge the sub-items into the existing code and eliminate the separate "Consequences for reception" code. As a result, we streamlined our code list significantly, reducing it from 55 codes to three main groups (A: individual experiences and actions; B: social conditions; C: Media conditions and context) with five parental codes and their child codes. This consolidation allowed for a more efficient and coherent coding structure.

Software problems

After obtaining consent for joint editing from all participants, the data was merged. However, the software posed challenges: Jensen used an older version, while Einwächter had purchased the newest version. The software allowed users of newer versions to open files created and edited with an older version, but not vice versa. Unfortunately, there was no solution to establish a shared data format, such as a compatibility mode. Consequently, the responsibility for merging all the data inadvertently fell on Einwächter, owner of the most recent version. The program's lack of stability was also problematic; it frequently crashed during saving and closing. Additionally, as the dataset grew, the software no longer allowed seamless switching between the 'coding' and 'editing' steps, necessitating frequent restarts. While structuring work steps mitigated this inconvenience, it remained bothersome. Discussion threads within software developer forums online attested to the fact that these issues were not isolated incidents. Luckily, despite the software crashes, data loss did not occur, as restoration was always possible. However, based on our experiences, we tend to advise against using Nvivo for extensive scholarly coding projects, especially if researchers cannot get free access to the software.

Research data management: Anticipating the data lifecycle

We endeavored to handle the data generated in the project as sustainably as possible but also as sparingly as possible (avoiding unnecessary data accumulation) and to comply with the principles of the now widely promoted and required use of research data management measures. This included thinking about the potential reusability of our data at an early stage. We have often regretted the fact that numerous studies based on interview data available in fan studies have not made their interview sources accessible, and we wanted to take a different approach with this publication. We used standard data life cycle models (like the one in Fig.1) as a guide to clarify how we wanted to handle the data generated by the project and whether and in what form we could make it available to others.

Fig.1: Research Data Lifecycle. Detail of Unravelling the Data Lifecycle (Chart, CC-BY 4.0 [Jung et al. 2023])

The cycle model assumes that data already play a role in the state of their anticipation (cf. blue phase, 'plan & design', see Fig.1) and have a concrete influence on the planning of the research. For us, it was relevant that we would be dealing with interview data in different forms (text-based, audio or video file-based) and that we would have to be able to collect these in one place (cf. purple phase, see Fig.1) and share them with each other (cf. orange phase, see Fig.1) to enter into an exchange with each other as researchers. A particular challenge of the life cycle for us was the international collaboration, which required a common storage space for the data, which we found in the password-protected cloud service (Hessenbox) of the University of Marburg, which allowed Einwächter to grant access to Jensen. In this space, we could rely on the fact that—in addition to our own backups on external hard drives—daily backups were also made by university IT staff. During the project, access to the data had been restricted to Einwächter and Jensen, who will keep safety copies of the anonymized material as well as a copy of the coded project in Nvivo (which is not included in this publication) until 2034. Participants have been informed about their rights to access or withdraw their data. The data analysis phase in the form of software-supported coding (explained earlier in the text, falling into the grey phase, see Fig.1) also posed a challenge: As we were using different versions of the same software, we had to work separately and could only share results in the form of exported codebooks or shared-screen discussions in video sessions.

With the present publication of data, we strive to 'share & disseminate' data of potential interest to others (cf. green phase in Fig.1) and make them available in a form that is reusable—sticking to the FAIR principles of "**F**indability, **A**ccessibility, **I**nteroperability, and **R**euse of digital assets" (https://www.go-fair.org/fair-principles/). Part of our considerations regarding access was also the decision to translate all interviews that were originally in German or Danish to English. For this we used the software DeepL for a first run and thoroughly edited the resulting texts to avoid mistranslations of idiomatic nuances.[2]

Furthermore, granting 'access & reuse' by means of publishing the data set in an open access repository like media/rep/ represents also a form of archiving that relieves our own archiving efforts. This is important because individual data archiving strategies are challenged, for example, by the fact that university careers may be affected by disruptions. If a data manager gets a new job at another university, data must be migrated (and, if necessary, the institution's claims clarified). The fact that our interview data will be available in Open Access helps to ensure longevity and sustainability of these data.

Who may profit from the data set?
We would like to conclude this section and data paper by stating that we consider the data collected in this research project to be useful to:
- Scholars interested in transformations of viewing patterns and consumer expectations in the digital era
- Fan studies researchers dealing with questions of non-fandom, anti-fandom (cf. Gray 2003) and viewer disenchantment
- Scholars interested in the phenomenon of decision fatigue

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2 For example, DeepL does not get the difference between 'seeing' and 'watching,' when translating German descriptions of viewing practices as both are represented by the same German word 'sehen.' For some expressions we chose to keep the somewhat awkward translation for lack of a better phrasing, but put them into brackets, like the Danish 'going dead' ('gå død i det'), which means something along the lines of 'getting bored/losing contact.'

- Early career researchers aiming to gain insight into a qualitative research process
- Anyone seeking insight into contemporary viewing behavior or how people reflect on different types of platform-based entertainment media (series, films, livestream)

For those interested in our results, we refer to the full article in this issue of *Fandom | Cultures | Research* as well as to the data set (most importantly the codebook detailing code descriptions), where we demonstrate significant overlaps between our first casual observations, the experiences that online journalists shared concerning their series consumption (mentioned at the beginning of this paper), and our informants' reports.

What the sample, due to its small size and certain homogeneity, cannot yet prove, is that the phenomenon of series fatigue is relevant to a wider, demographically more diverse audience. We are aware, that both the informants as well as quoted media journalists deal with series professionally, which may cause its own form of exhaustion/fatigue as these people may find themselves having to watch series much more often than others in order to keep up with a scholarly or industry discourse.

Although our exploratory sample is limited, the data we collected are rich and represent a great diversity with regard to negative reactions to serial content, which we assume may apply to other parts of the population as well. – The experience, for example, that interfaces of streaming platforms change frequently and that they are difficult to navigate, as our informants stated, is something that, if it is difficult for more professionalized audiences, will surely impact less professionalized viewers as well, if not even more so. Others stated they often lose track of which series they already watched (or up to which point), which prompted individual measures of managing their leisure activity (with lists and tracking apps).

We thus conclude that our observations are indicative of the fact that viewing conditions have changed in a way that makes watching series less enjoyable for quite a number of people and for quite a number of reasons. Furthermore, our data indicate users' growing discontent with platform-oriented media distribution (e.g., the users are tired of having to manage numerous costly subscriptions, feel manipulated), which makes researching the phenomenon of series fatigue even more worthwhile and intriguing from a media and communications studies' point of view. We hope to contribute to the discussion by making transparent how we obtained our data and came to our conclusions so others can build on them.

Contents in data set
- Questionnaire
- Preliminary Coding Chart
- Final Codebook with Examples
- Survey Answers and Interview Transcripts
- Consent Form (template)

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