



Fandom | Cultures | Research

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F | C | R Editors

Building Ground

Editorial to the Fourth Issue of Fandom | Cultures | Research

ABSTRACT

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Times are rough for the humanities and finding peer reviewers who graciously agree to do the hard, usually invisible, and anonymous work behind the pages has become increasingly difficult. What may look like a simple matchmaking task from the outside often involves contacting ten or more scholars for a single article before finding the right fit—with the number climbing significantly when a submission sits at an interdisciplinary crossroads. *Fandom | Cultures | Research* is, by its very nature, not a single-field journal: our articles draw on media studies, sociology, gender studies, ethnography, platform studies, and beyond, which means that finding reviewers requires navigating multiple disciplines, subfields, and scholarly communities at once. We are deeply grateful for the immense support we have received from scholars willing to engage with this complexity and we want to take this opportunity to thank our peer reviewers of the previous two years:

Aianne Amado, Philip Auslander, Dorothee Birke, Luca Paolo Bruno, Caio Cardoso, Bertha Chin, Samantha Close, Tanya Cook, Danielle Coombs, Jo Coghlan, Robert Dörre, Amanda Firestone, Victoria Godwin, Briony Hannell, Katriina Heljakka, Katharina Hülsmann, José Andrés Santiago Iglesias, Iris Vidmar Jovanović, Bethan Jones, Sandra Kero, Ruth Knepel, Melanie Kohnen, Annekathrin Kohout, Maren Kraemer, Markus Kügle, Nicolle Lamerichs, Merja Mahrt, Dennis Mathei, Kai Matuszkiewicz, Adrienne Merritt, Sabrina Mittermeier, Lori Morimoto, Jamie Roots, Michael Schneider, Holger Schwetter, Rich Shivener, Fabienne Silberstein-Bamfort, Daniel Stein, Martina Stemberger, Sven Stollfuß, Kasey Symons, Claus Tieber, Elsa-Margareta Venzmer, Peter Vignold, Thalia Vollstedt, Abby Waysdorf, Milan Weber, Franziska Wilke, and Rebecca Williams.

We are pleased to present the fourth issue of *Fandom | Cultures | Research*. In this issue, you will find six peer-reviewed articles discussing various case studies and methods in fan and participatory studies. Taken together, these pieces reflect the wide range of contemporary fandom research: from anti-fandom and online violence to collecting cultures, branded liveness, music streaming communities, gendered legitimacy, and the ethics of digital fieldwork.

Moritz Konrad opens the issue with “Vom Sündenbock zur Lolcow: Anti-Fandoms, hatewatching und die Dialektik der Partizipationskultur.” Drawing on the cases of Drachenlord, MaxPro3500, and Sören-Santiago, the article examines how anti-fandom produces online and offline violence, turning it into a participatory spectacle that even spills over into mainstream media.

In “Breyer and Stone: Feed the Horse,” Angela Barajas turns to the specialized world of model horse fandom. Through interviews, social media analysis, and promotional materials, Barajas explores model horses as a collector’s market as well as the love for horses as a central element of the horse girl identity.

Julia Willms’s “‘May I Introduce Choreography and Merriment:’ Liveness as Marketer and Parasocial Refiner in *Severance*” reads live installations surrounding the Apple TV show *Severance* (2022-) through the framework of parasocial refinement. Willms shows how the three installations at Grand Central

Terminal, Tower Bridge, and Bell Works are tied into existing structures of “affective investment, fan participation, and brand strategy” (48).

Daisy Pignetti’s paper, “‘Intentional Communities, Good Vibes, Great People:’ A Survey of Listeners of Music and DJ Channels on Twitch during COVID,” explores a different form of liveness—music livestreams on Twitch.tv. Based on survey data collected between Aug. 13 and Sep. 19, 2025, the article argues that these channels continued to serve as meaningful community spaces well beyond the height of the pandemic.

With “‘Who Are You Calling a Puck Bunny?’ Gendered Boundary Work and the Production of Legitimate Hockey Fandom,” Dawn Marie Lighthiser examines how women hockey fans negotiate and resist gendered stereotypes. Drawing on netnographic analysis, participant observation, and semi-structured interviews, the article shows how legitimacy in sport fandom is actively constructed through ongoing boundary work.

The issue concludes its peer-reviewed section with Nicole Margheim’s methodology paper, “Experiments in Informed Consent on a Fandom Discord Server.” Focusing on the ethical and practical challenges of conducting qualitative research in digital communities, Margheim maps the unstable boundaries between data collection, lurking, and human-subject research—offering a timely reflection on what it means to be present as a researcher in online communities and how informed consent operates on platforms like Discord.

Alongside our peer-reviewed section, we are very proud that our editorially reviewed section has grown into something substantial: this issue contains ten book reviews, three conference reports, and two fandom voices, each attesting to the breadth and relevance of the field. This does not happen on its own—it is the result of persistent outreach, networking, and careful coordination. Overseeing a large review section means identifying relevant publications, recruiting reviewers, and guiding drafts through revision. Here, too, we rely on the generosity of scholars and fans who agree to invest time and energy into writing drafts and coordinating revisions and approvals with our editors, often on short notice, and we are grateful to everyone who contributed their expertise.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue and look forward to your feedback as well as suggestions for themed sections and other future contributions.

Yours sincerely,
the Editorial Team

