



MIKE OTTO

REST IN PEACE, TELEVISION Today's hottest sitcoms and series are way more viewer-friendly when they're on DVD.

I can't watch TV anymore

DVDs give me commercial-free, fast-forward options in high definition



PAUL OWEN

You'll have to forgive me if I'm not excited at all about the new TV season. Don't get me wrong, though; I'm as thrilled as anyone to find out what was in Kendall Casablancas' briefcase on *Veronica Mars*, but that doesn't mean that I'm going to be glued to the TV on Tuesdays just to see what happens next. You see, after catching the first two seasons on DVD, I just have no desire to watch it—or any other prime-time programming—on TV anymore.

Everything on TV that's worth watching—and even most of it that isn't—is hitting DVD these days. DVDs allow you to enjoy a show in high definition and surround sound (if filmed in it, which most major networks do nowadays) without forking over the ridiculous amounts of cash that Shaw and Bell charge for HD programming, not to mention the associated receiver. The programming comes commercial free, the season is never interrupted by re-runs and if there's a particularly riveting moment, you don't have to wait a week to see the exciting conclusion.

DVDs avoid many of the pitfalls that can occur in network programming. A show's time slot doesn't affect

DVD devotees, and often a critically acclaimed show such as *Freaks and Geeks* can gain a second following in DVD land. Fox might have screwed with *Family Guy* enough over its first three seasons that it could never gain the audience required to keep it on the air, but, after selling 2.2 million units in the US alone in its first year on DVD, the show gained a second chance and is now thriving.

Between the lack of commercials and the convenience to watch whenever you feel like it, DVDs and the Internet have ruined television, while at the same time, making it infinitely more awesome.

After Fox got trigger-happy with *Firefly*, its DVD sales proved there was enough of a market for *Serenity* to be made. The selling ability of DVDs allows consumers to provide a more accurate conception of how popular a show is. I could love *24* or *Desperate Housewives*, but if I'm working nights, there's no way for me to watch them except on DVD.

And don't forget the fact that DVDs also give Canadian viewers the opportunity to catch shows that air on the BBC or HBO; otherwise, they would need a specialty cable or satellite package to do so. Having spent the past year-and-a-half working for a large, chain video store, it's no shock that *The Sopranos*, *Six Feet Under* and *Sex and the City* are the most commonly rented DVDs.

People often don't get into a show right off the bat, but with the exception of hoping for summer reruns, getting fully caught up on a show, especially after the first season has aired, used to be virtually impossible. DVD changes all that, as well as giving viewers the ability to rent the first disc of a show to test whether or not they'll enjoy it.

Finally, if legality isn't your bag and you can't wait until the next season comes out on DVD, new episodes are quite often available for download on the Internet. Using a program such as BitTorrent will allow you to catch shows often as soon as the morning after they've aired in prime time.

Between the lack of commercials and the convenience to watch whenever you feel like it, DVDs and the Internet have ruined television, while at the same time making it infinitely more awesome. Maybe I won't be tuning in to Fox on Tuesday nights, but I won't miss a single episode of *House*—at least until they cancel that, too.

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