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## OLD HABITS DIE HARD

We all know that our brains are changing. Babies are practically born using cell phones and tablets; teenagers exist half online and half in person; adults attend meetings in PJs, from the comfort of their homes; and seniors finally cracked how to use the remote.

During the past decade, the way we tell, produce, and consume stories has also been evolving in such a fast pace that our brains are now prepared to unveil sophisticated narratives. The gimmicks are extensive: flashbacks, flashforwards, ellipses, parallel stories, multiple narrators, alternate timelines, in media res, time travel, manifold storylines, dream immersions, stories within stories, tone shifts, anachronic episodes. And the list goes on.

The main phenomena responsible for this explosion of narratives is the power of [binge-watching](#). Firstly, viewers can now determine when to watch content – while before, the distributor (cable and broadcast networks) used to define it for their audiences. Basically, prior to streaming, content used to be sliced in time slots, now it's served in an all-you-can-eat buffet. Secondly, viewers tend to watch between two and six episodes at a time, allowing interdependent narratives to be glued together.

Some of those experiences are reinvigorating. Like the first German Netflix Original, DARK, a four-season series puzzled so hard that only bingeing made it possible to follow the story. Or the Freeform production (streamed by Hulu) CRUEL SUMMER, with three intertwined timelines, recently renewed for a second season.

Just last week, the Netflix KALEIDOSCOPE premiered on a high promise: creators claim you can watch the episodes in any given order (they all have color names, so you can pick your own palette). Sounds fun, but it can be overwhelming – according to an [UK Independent article](#) there are 40,000 combinations to watch this series! Anyone dare to explore?

Nevertheless, with all innovation, traditional and linear storytelling are still very desirable. In an ocean of content from which viewers need to choose their daily entertainment, asking them to order the episodes can be too much. The proof is in the pudding: as soon as Kaleidoscope was released, chronological lists of the episodes went viral.

This is a good indicator that, as a [New York Times article](#) suggests, we may be hitting the limits of the way we want to watch TV. Not only storytelling needs to maintain some of its particular characteristics, but old habits die hard.

If you need help thinking outside of the box, bringing innovation to your narrative, or adorning traditional storytelling, give us a shout.

And if you've been enjoying our newsletters, please forward this to a friend and encourage them to sign up for our list [here](#).

Best,  
Laura.

P.S.: And yes, we've got you. In *media res* means a TV series that starts in the middle of the plot, such as HOW TO GET AWAY WITH MURDER and QUANTICO.

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