

# 2018 Television Report

Film  
LA







6255 W. Sunset Blvd.  
12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Hollywood, CA 90028

[filmla.com](http://filmla.com)

[@FilmLA](https://twitter.com/FilmLA)  
[f FilmLA](https://www.facebook.com/FilmLA)  
[i FilmLAinc](https://www.instagram.com/FilmLAinc)

**CREDITS:**

**Contributors:**  
Adrian McDonald  
Corina Sandru  
Philip Sokoloski

**Graphic Design:**  
Shane Hirschman

**Photography:**  
Shutterstock  
HBO  
ABC  
FOX

**Published by:**  
FILMLA., INC®

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

INTRODUCTION ..... 2

PRODUCTION OF LIVE-ACTION SCRIPTED SERIES ..... 3

THE INFLUENCE OF DIGITAL STREAMING SERVICES ..... 4

THE IMPACT OF CORD-CUTTING CONSUMERS ..... 4

THE REALITY OF RISING PRODUCTION COSTS ..... 5

NEW PROJECTS: PILOTS VS. STRAIGHT-TO-SERIES ORDERS ..... 6

REMAKES, REBOOTS, REVIVALS—THE RIP VAN WINKLE EFFECT ..... 8

SERIES PRODUCTION BY LOCATION ..... 10

SERIES PRODUCTION BY EPISODE COUNT ..... 10

FOCUS ON CALIFORNIA ..... 11

NEW PROJECTS BY LOCATION ..... 13

NEW PROJECTS BY DURATION ..... 14

CONCLUSION ..... 14

ABOUT THIS REPORT ..... 15

## INTRODUCTION

It is rare to find someone who does not claim to have a favorite TV show. Whether one is a devotee of a long-running, time-tested procedural on basic cable, or a binge-watching cord-cutter glued to Hulu® on Sunday afternoons, for many of us, our television viewing habits are a part of who we are.

But outside the industry where new television content is conceived and created, it is rare to pause and consider how television series are made, much less where this work is performed, and why, and by whom, and how much money is spent along the way.

In this study we explore notable developments impacting the television industry and how those changes affect production levels in California and competing jurisdictions. Some of the trends we consider are: growth in the number of live-action scripted series in production, the influence of digital streaming services on this number, increasing production costs and a turn toward remakes and reboots and away from traditional pilot production.

What emerges is a portrait of an industry once more in growth mode, creating opportunities for jurisdictions seeking to capture a greater share of television production.

PHOTO: HBO / *Ballers*



## PRODUCTION OF LIVE-ACTION SCRIPTED SERIES

In recent years, many observers have said we are living in a “Golden Age of Television.” While opinions may differ as to whether this is true from a creative perspective, it is certainly true from a quantitative one.

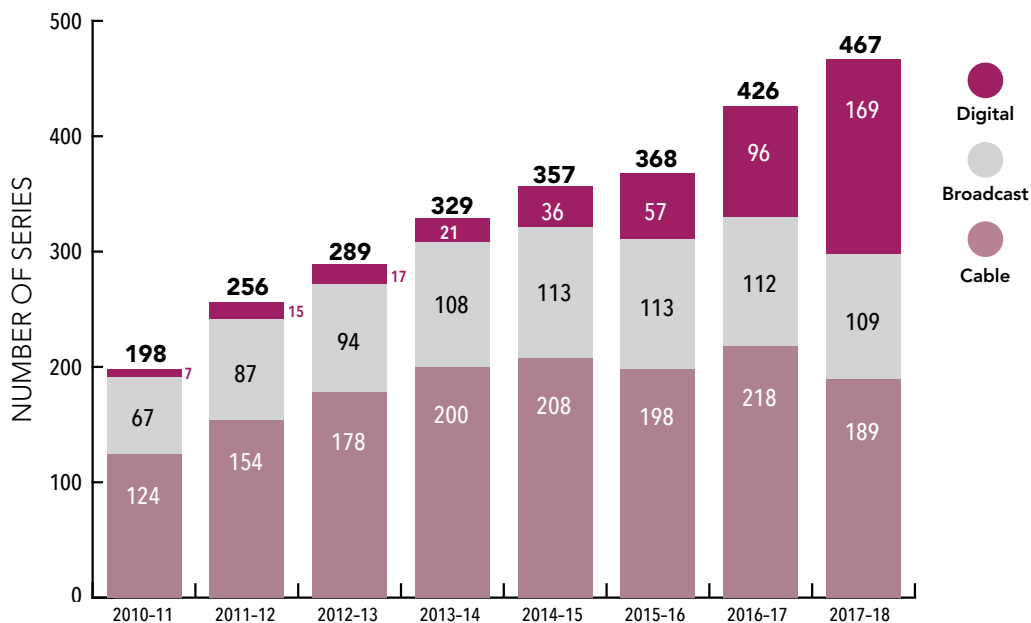
By FilmLA’s count, over the past two years, 467 live-action scripted series were produced by U.S. studios for the U.S. market. FilmLA’s count includes all scripted live-action one-hour and half-hour shows produced for broadcast, cable and digital streaming networks. The count excludes animated projects, reality shows, late-night talk shows and game shows. It does include children’s programming.

According to FilmLA’s count, the number of scripted live-action series in production increased nearly 10 percent overall from 2016–17 to 2017–18. This increase was solely driven by digital series growth.

The number of series produced for broadcast networks declined approximately 3 percent in 2017–18 from the prior year, while basic and premium cable saw a decline of approximately 13 percent.

Meanwhile, production for digital networks increased 76 percent from 2016–17 (96 series count) to 2017–18 (169 series count). Since 2010–11, the number of series produced for digital networks increased an astonishing 2,314 percent.

### NUMBER OF LIVE-ACTION SCRIPTED SERIES PRODUCED BY U.S. STUDIOS



Where is all this growth in digital coming from? Netflix® accounted for just over half (86) of the live-action scripted digital series, a dozen other streaming services had at least one series in production for the current or upcoming season. Amazon® and Hulu are the industry’s dominant players after Netflix, with 22 and 16 series, respectively. Other streaming services or digital networks with five or more live-action scripted series in our sample include YouTube®, CBS All Access®, Facebook® and Verizon’s go90 service.<sup>1</sup>

The volume of new series and other programming produced for digital networks shows no signs of slowing. In August 2018, YouTube Premium claimed the service had a total of 65 “shows and movies” since it launched in 2016. In 2019, YouTube Premium has plans to add at least 50 additional shows. In addition, AT&T®, which now owns HBO®, has announced plans to greatly expand the volume of programming on the network.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As of July 2018, Verizon announced that it was pulling the plug on the go90 service. The status of series produced for the service is unknown.

<sup>2</sup> By blurring the lines and making it more difficult to categorize new series by distribution media, the cord cutting phenomenon presents a challenge for production trends analysis.

## THE INFLUENCE OF DIGITAL STREAMING SERVICES

The impact that digital streaming services are having on the entertainment industry and the television landscape is considerable. From 2012 to June 2018, the number of Netflix subscribers in the U.S. grew from 27 million to 56 million. Worldwide, Netflix boasts over 130 million subscribers.

Alongside subscriber growth, Netflix has increased its spend on original content, to the point that its investment now resembles those of other major studios. In 2017 the annual spend on non-sports content by NBCUniversal<sup>®</sup> was \$10.2 billion, for Time Warner \$8 billion, Disney<sup>®</sup> \$7.8 billion and Netflix \$6.3 billion.<sup>3</sup> In 2018, Netflix plans to spend \$12–\$13 billion on original content.<sup>4</sup> The OTT (“Over the Top”) streaming model Netflix pioneered is, according to *Variety*’s Cynthia Littleton, “the reason Disney and Comcast chased 21st Century Fox with such fervor” and “was a big part of AT&T’s motivation for scooping up Time Warner.” Of Netflix’s impact on entertainment industry economics, Littleton called it the “biggest shift... in decades.”<sup>5</sup>

In August 2018, Disney CEO Bob Iger said creation of the company’s planned DTC digital service, is the “biggest priority” for 2019. Disney Play, according to Iger, will feature a lower subscriber price point than Netflix, but it will also offer less. “We’re going to walk before we run,” Iger said, “as it relates to volume of content.”

Still, there is probably room to grow. Amazon, Apple<sup>®</sup>, and Alphabet (Google<sup>®</sup>), have strong access to capital and documented interest in original content production. While Amazon is already established as an OTT streaming service, with content spending reaching \$5 billion in 2018, the company has yet to flex its financial muscle on a scale similar to Netflix.

Likewise, Apple has only begun to invest in original content, with a relatively modest spend of \$1 billion budgeted in the near future. Should additional players aggressively enter this space as believed, the overall number of live-action series in development will likely increase.

- 3 Rani Molla, “Netflix Spends More on Content,” *Recode*, February 26, 2018: <https://www.recode.net/2018/2/26/17053936/how-much-netflix-billion-original-content-programs-tv-movies-hulu-disney-chart>
- 4 Dana Feldman, “Netflix’s Content Budget is Updated,” *Forbes*, July 9, 2018: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/danafeldman/2018/07/09/netflixs-content-budget-is-updated-to-13b-in-2018/>
- 5 Cynthia Littleton, “How Hollywood is Racing to Catch Up With Netflix,” *Variety*, August 2018: <https://variety.com/2018/digital/features/media-streaming-services-netflix-disney-comcast-att-1202910463/>

## THE IMPACT OF CORD-CUTTING CONSUMERS

So-called “cord cutting” is another consumer phenomenon that can be associated with the apparent growth of original content on streaming media. The shift of viewer eyeballs from one distribution channel to another seems to correlate with new content growth on those platforms.

Data collected by Leichtman Research Group shows that the top providers of pay TV services began losing customers on an annual basis in 2013, when 170,000 customers cancelled service. This number has steadily increased, to just over 2.9 million as of 2017.

At the same time, customers embraced live-television streaming services like Roku<sup>®</sup>, DirectTV Now<sup>™</sup>, Sling TV<sup>™</sup>, Playstation<sup>™</sup> Vue, Hulu with Live TV and YouTube TV. These services offer live-streaming packages delivered over the internet that are akin to pay TV cable packages, but generally at a lower price point. Monthly prices for live-streaming packages from providers like YouTube or Sling TV range from \$25 to \$40 versus an average of \$100 for major cable providers.

Thus, even though 2017–18 was the most productive series development cycle FilmLA has ever observed, none of the year-over-year growth can be attributed to an increase in the number of network or cable shows. From a production standpoint, both of these mature sectors of the business are just as robust—but no more so—than they were back in 2013–14.

## THE REALITY OF RISING PRODUCTION COSTS

When it comes to one-hour series, the budget for many of today's top shows approaches or exceeds \$100 million per season, an amount that rivals many large budget feature films.

As a result, a studio making a two-year commitment to a one-hour series like Warner Bros.' *Blindspot* (\$79 million, S1) will spend more money to produce it than to produce a big budget film like *Wonder Woman* (\$150 million). Every successful TV series is an economic boon to the hosting location.

A partial sample of estimated production budgets for current one-hour series revealed per-episode production costs ranging from \$3.1 million to \$15 million. Depending on the number of episodes ordered, the price of an entire season can cost from \$35 million to \$135 million.

SERIES	SEASON SPEND	PER EPISODE SPEND	STUDIO
<i>The Americans</i> , Season 4 <sup>7</sup>	\$54,000,000	\$4,150,000	FX
<i>Billions</i> , Season 1 <sup>7</sup>	\$62,400,000	\$5,200,000	Showtime
<i>Blindspot</i> , Season 1 <sup>7</sup>	\$79,000,000	\$3,400,000	NBC
<i>Blue Bloods</i> , Season 6 <sup>7</sup>	\$100,400,000	\$4,560,000	CBS
<i>The Crown</i> , Season 1 <sup>8</sup>	\$100,000,000	\$10,000,000	Netflix
<i>The Deuce</i> , Season 1 <sup>7</sup>	\$62,000,000	\$7,750,000	HBO
<i>Elementary</i> , Season 4 <sup>7</sup>	\$88,500,000	\$3,680,000	CBS
<i>Game of Thrones</i> , Season 8 <sup>8</sup>	\$90,000,000	\$15,000,000	HBO
<i>The Good Wife</i> , Season 7 <sup>7</sup>	\$78,000,000	\$3,545,000	CBS
<i>Gotham</i> , Season 2 <sup>7</sup>	\$111,000,000	\$5,045,000	FOX
<i>Iron Fist</i> , Season 1 <sup>7</sup>	\$62,000,000	\$4,760,000	Netflix
<i>Jack Ryan</i> , Season 1 <sup>8</sup>	\$64,000,000	\$8,000,000	Amazon
<i>Madame Secretary</i> , Season 2 <sup>7</sup>	\$91,000,000	\$3,950,000	CBS
<i>Mayans MC</i> , Season 1 <sup>6</sup>	\$35,000,000	\$3,500,000	FX
<i>The Night Of</i> , Season 1 <sup>7</sup>	\$52,000,000	\$6,500,000	HBO
<i>The Orville</i> , Season 2 <sup>6</sup>	\$69,000,000	\$5,700,000	FOX
<i>Person of Interest</i> , Season 4 <sup>7</sup>	\$95,000,000	\$4,310,000	CBS
<i>Shooter</i> , Season 3 <sup>6</sup>	\$40,600,000	\$3,100,000	USA
<i>S.W.A.T.</i> , Season 2 <sup>6</sup>	\$80,000,000	\$3,400,000	NBC
<i>This Is US</i> , Season 3 <sup>6</sup>	\$56,600,000	\$3,100,000	NBC
<i>Vinyl</i> , Season 1 <sup>7</sup>	\$135,000,000	\$13,500,000	HBO

With increased demand for original content for broadcast, cable and digital distribution, the availability of experienced crew, cast and resources to make these shows becomes a factor. Locations richly equipped with these resources are, perhaps unsurprisingly, very successful at attracting new projects.

<sup>6</sup> California Film Commission, Program 2.0 CFC Approved Projects List: <http://film.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2.0-Website-Approved-Projects-List-Online-11.19.18.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Empire State Development Reports: [https://esd.ny.gov/esd-media-center/reports?tid\[\]=516&keys=film](https://esd.ny.gov/esd-media-center/reports?tid[]=516&keys=film)

<sup>8</sup> Maureen Ryan, "TV Series Budgets Hit the Breaking Point", *Variety*, Sept. 26, 2017: <https://variety.com/2017/tv/news/tv-series-budgets-costs-rising-peak-tv-1202570158/>

Continued on following page. »

## THE REALITY OF RISING PRODUCTION COSTS (CONTINUED)

As FilmLA revealed in its *Sound Stage Production Report* (available on FilmLA.com), the hundreds of sound stages in Los Angeles have been in extremely high demand, and occupancy rates trend above 90 percent at most major studios. “For filming that took place on certified sound stages in 2016, the overwhelming number of shoot days were for scripted television (both one-hour and half-hour series) which accounted for 75% of all stage shoot days in 2016.”<sup>9</sup>

Anecdotally, the story is the same for other production centers like Vancouver, Toronto, New York, Atlanta and London, where production space is at a premium. Even in Greater Los Angeles, high soundstage occupancy has motivated entrepreneurial production companies to build their sets in industrial spaces and converted warehouses.

The influx of new TV series in Los Angeles has also resulted in increased on-location production.

9 FilmLA. 2017 Sound Stage Production Report, “Trends in Sound Stage Filming”, Page 5.

## NEW PROJECTS: PILOTS VS. STRAIGHT-TO-SERIES ORDERS

Over the last several years, non-traditional programming available from cable channels and online streaming services like Amazon, Netflix and Hulu has begun altering not just the landscape for new projects, but also how players throughout the industry acquire and deliver content to consumers.

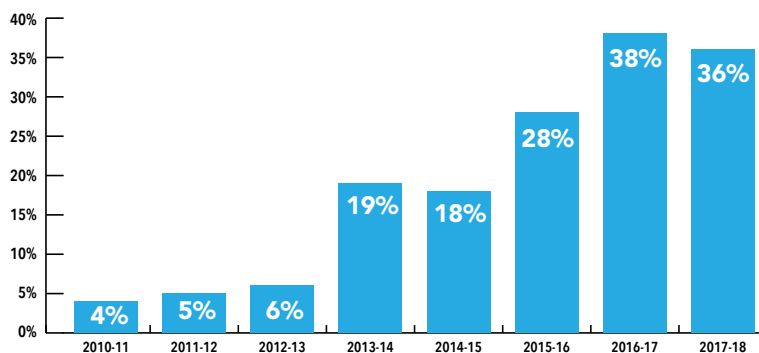
Prior to the popularization of original scripted programming on cable, most new series started life as traditional “pilots.” For decades, broadcast networks courted advertisers in an expensive and seasonally-driven “upfronts” process, in which advertisers would preview the shows to be aired on broadcast networks in the fall and help predict their success.

Today, approximately 36 percent of new shows are ordered straight-to-series, that is, they receive the “green light” for series production without going through an upfront process. This solidifies a trend that began five years ago, as first reported on by FilmLA during the 2012–13 new project development cycle. Four percent of all new shows were ordered straight-to-series in 2010–11. By 2017–18, a total of 58 shows (45 one-hour, 13 half-hour) were ordered straight-to-series across broadcast, cable and digital networks, comprising a share of the business nine times larger than in 2010.

The arrival of digitally distributed content helped to accelerate this trend away from traditional pilots. From 2011-2017, the share of new project activity attributed to digital networks increased from less than one percent of the market to 19 percent—almost a fifth of all new production. During the 2017–18 cycle, digital’s share of new projects increased to nearly 28 percent (44 count). This is a substantial increase for digital streaming services—and an economic benefit to the places where these projects are made.

In 2017–18, the three leading digital networks for new projects were Amazon (with 14 projects), Netflix (12) and Hulu (6). These leading digital networks were joined by newer and/or smaller streaming players that include Sony Crackle®, YouTube, DC Universe™, CBS All Access and Facebook.

### SHARE OF NEW PROJECTS ORDERED STRAIGHT TO SERIES



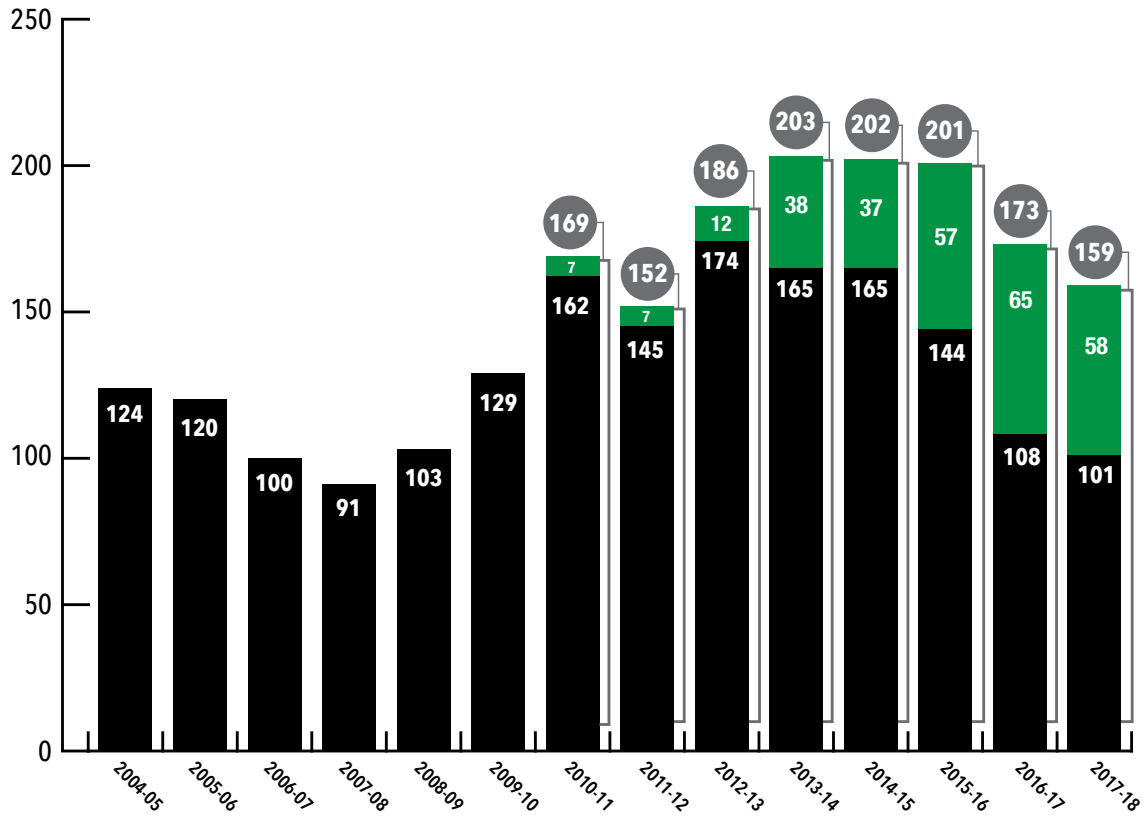


## NEW PROJECTS, PILOTS VS. STRAIGHT-TO-SERIES ORDERS (CONTINUED)

One effect of increased reliance on straight-to-series orders has been a leveling off or decrease in the number of new projects made each year. Looking at all pilot production activity, FilmLA's official count shows that 159 broadcast, cable and digital projects (106 one-hour, 53 half-hour) were produced during the 2017-18 development cycle, 14 projects less than the prior year and 44 fewer than the peak yield FilmLA reported four years ago.

### NEW PROJECT COUNT BY DEVELOPMENT CYCLE

● PILOTS ● STRAIGHT-TO-SERIES ● TOTALS



## REMAKES, REBOOTS, REVIVALS—THE RIP VAN WINKLE EFFECT

Today's series production landscape includes a Rip Van Winkle tale, in which viewers could be forgiven for asking, "Wait, haven't I seen this before?" Demand for compelling content, combined with the high stakes of straight-to-series orders, seems to have kindled new interest in remakes, reboots and revivals.

With every major streaming service (Netflix, Hulu, Amazon, etc.) studio conglomerate (Disney, AT&T, Viacom®, CBS, etc.) and Silicon Valley titan (Apple, YouTube, etc.) developing original content, the familiarity factor has many uses. From a business standpoint, a remake offers built-in awareness based on a proven concept which can lead to a large premiere audience willing to sample the latest iteration. As an added bonus, these projects virtually guarantee international sales to an audience already familiar with the original premise.

In this brave new world, films with a following can gain new life as television series (*Lethal Weapon*, *Fargo*, etc.), a favorite past show can return with the original cast (*Fuller House*, *Will & Grace*, etc.) or a popular series can be rebooted with a culture/gender makeover (*Magnum P.I.*, *One Day at the Time*, etc.).

### TV PROJECTS BASED ON PRIOR FEATURE FILMS (2010-2019)

 CANCELLED

 PILOT ONLY,  
(NOT PICKED UP FOR SERIES)

BASED ON PREVIOUS FEATURE FILMS	ORIGINAL RELEASE	REMAKE YEAR	PLATFORM / NETWORK
<i>A Series of Unfortunate Events</i>	2004	2017	Netflix
<i>Ash vs Evil Dead (Evil Dead)</i>	1981	2015	Starz
<i>Bates Motel (Psycho)</i>	1960	2013	A&E
<i>Cobra Kai (Karate Kid)</i>	1984	2018	YouTube
<i>Dear White People</i>	2014	2017	Netflix
<i>Damien (The Omen)</i>	1976	2016	FOX
<i>Emerald City</i>	1939	2017	NBC
<i>Fargo</i>	1996	2014	FX
<i>First Wives Club</i>	1996	2018	Paramount Network
<i>Frequency</i>	2000	2016	CW
<i>From Dusk Till Dawn</i>	1996	2014	El Rey Network
<i>Get Shorty</i>	1995	2017	EPIX
<i>Girlfriend Experience</i>	2009	2016	Starz
<i>Heathers<sup>10</sup></i>	1988	2018	Paramount Network
<i>L.A. Confidential</i>	1997	2018	CBS
<i>L.A.'s Finest (Bad Boys)</i>	1995	2018	Spectrum
<i>Lethal Weapon</i>	1987	2016	FOX
<i>Limitless</i>	2011	2015	CBS
<i>Minority Report</i>	2002	2015	FOX
<i>Rush Hour</i>	1998	2016	CBS
<i>Scream</i>	1996	2015	MTV
<i>Shooter</i>	2007	2016	USA
<i>She's Gotta Have It</i>	1986	2017	Netflix
<i>Snatch</i>	2000	2017	Crackle
<i>Snowpiercer</i>	2014	2018	TNT
<i>S.W.A.T.</i>	1975, 2003	2017	CBS
<i>Taken</i>	2008	2017	NBC
<i>Teen Wolf</i>	1985	2011	MTV
<i>The Exorcist</i>	1973	2016	FOX
<i>The Purge</i>	2013	2018	Syfy
<i>Training Day</i>	2001	2017	CBS
<i>Tremors</i>	1990	2018	Syfy
<i>Wet Hot American Summer: First Day of Camp</i>	2001	2015	Netflix
<i>Westworld</i>	1973	2016	HBO

<sup>10</sup> Show filmed an entire season but is being shopped for a distributor.

## TV PROJECTS BASED ON PRIOR SHOWS (2010-2019)

● CANCELLED

● PILOT ONLY,  
(NOT PICKED UP FOR SERIES)

BASED ON PREVIOUS TV SHOWS	ORIGINAL RELEASE	REMAKE YEAR	PLATFORM / NETWORK
<i>24: Live Another Day</i>	2001	2014	FOX
<i>24: Legacy</i>	2001	2017	FOX
<i>Anne with an E</i>	1985	2017	Netflix
<i>Arrested Development</i>	2003	2018	Netflix
<i>Cagney &amp; Lacey</i>	1981	2018	CBS
<i>Charmed</i>	1998	2018	CW
<i>Dynasty</i>	1981	2017	CW
<i>Dallas</i>	1978	2012	TNT
<i>Fuller House</i>	1987	2016	Netflix
<i>Get Christie Love</i>	1974	2018	ABC
<i>Gilmore Girls</i>	2000	2017	Netflix
<i>Girl Meets World</i>	1993	2014	Disney Channel
<i>Greatest American Hero</i>	1981	2018	ABC
<i>Hawaii Five-O</i>	1968	2010	CBS
<i>Heroes Reborn</i>	2006	2015	NBC
<i>Lost in Space</i>	1965	2018	NETFLIX
<i>MacGyver</i>	1985	2016	CBS
<i>Magnum P.I.</i>	1980	2018	CBS
<i>Murphy Brown</i>	1988	2018	CBS
<i>One Day at the Time</i>	1975	2017	NETFLIX
<i>Prison Break</i>	2005	2017	FOX
<i>Roswell</i>	1999	2019	CW
<i>Star Trek: Discovery</i>		2017	CBS All Access
<i>The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina</i>	1996	2018	Netflix
<i>The Conners (Roseanne)</i>	1988	2018	ABC
<i>The Odd Couple</i>	1970	2015	CBS
<i>The Tick</i>	2001	2016	Amazon
<i>The Twilight Zone</i>	1959	2019	CBS All Access
<i>The X-Files</i>	1993	2015	FOX
<i>Twin Peaks</i>	1990	2017	Showtime
<i>Uncle Buck</i>	1989	2016	ABC
<i>Will &amp; Grace</i>	1998	2017	NBC



## SERIES PRODUCTION BY LOCATION

Given all of the creative evolution the television industry has experienced over the last decade, it is worthwhile to look at which cities, states and countries are reaping the benefits of increased series production.

For 2017–18, California will be home to 176 of the 467 scripted series in FilmLA's official count. This is a slight increase in year-over-year production for California; FilmLA counted 173 scripted series in 2016–2017.

In all, eight locations (California, New York, British Columbia, Georgia, Ontario, the United Kingdom (UK), New Mexico and Illinois) will host ten or more series in 2017–18. These eight locations accounted for 79 percent (371 series) of all scripted series produced by U.S. studios.

Thus, while California's share of sampled live-action series hovers near 38 percent, the Golden State still maintains a commanding lead over its closest competitors.

The number of locations that have at least one live-action scripted series is also growing. Last year, 48 locations across the globe were home to one or more shows. That number increased to 57 locations in 2018, a list that includes 21 U.S. states and 33 countries.

## SERIES PRODUCTION BY EPISODE COUNT

The number of scripted series in production has seen remarkable growth, but the number of episodes produced increased only slightly, according to data provided to FilmLA by UCLA's Division of Social Sciences. While the number of scripted series in production grew by 86 percent from 2011–2016, the number of series episodes produced grew by just eight percent, from 4,806 episodes to 5,096 over the same period.<sup>11</sup>

Primetime series produced for broadcast networks like ABC and FOX traditionally comprise 20–24 episodes per season. In recent years, however, many series produced for the broadcast networks have seen episode orders fall below 20. The majority of the growth in the number of scripted series produced is driven by digital networks, which typically order seasons of 12 episodes or less. According to the most recent data from UCLA, in 2015–16 scripted series on broadcast networks averaged 16.5 episodes per season, cable shows averaged 11.5 episodes per season and digital shows averaged 9.5 episodes per season.

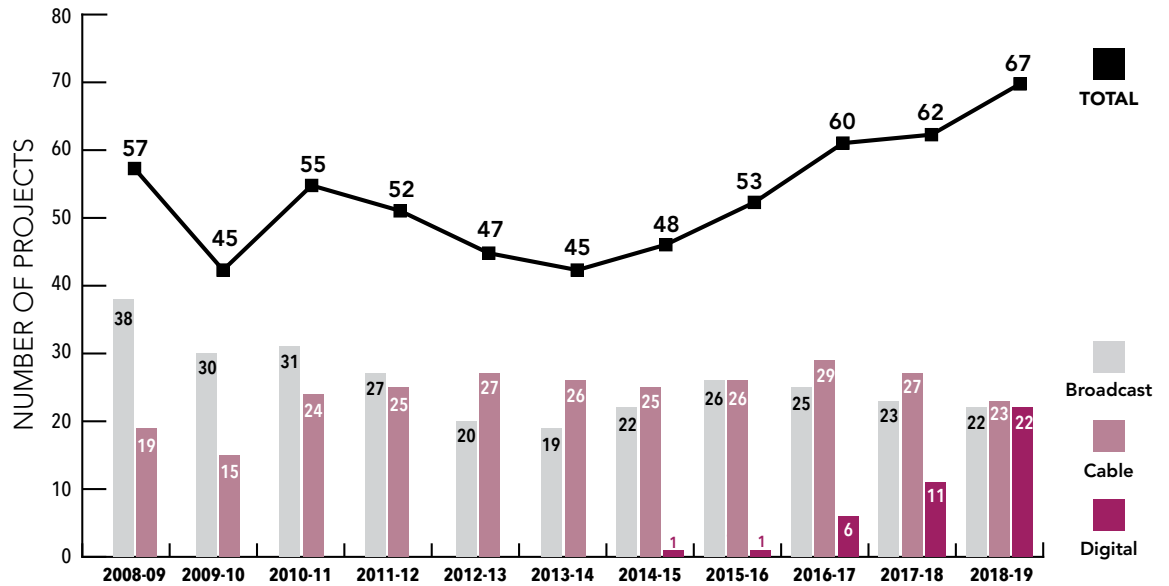
<sup>11</sup> 2018 Hollywood Diversity Report database, UCLA Division of Social Sciences.



## FOCUS ON CALIFORNIA

With the number of one-hour series calling California home rising to 67 projects for the current/upcoming season, it's the best year on record. Most of the California one-hour series are shows on basic and premium cable channels. However, the fastest growing segment of California's one-hour series are those produced for digital networks. Digital one-hour series now account for nearly one third (approximately 32 percent) of all California-based one-hour series. By comparison, one-hour digital series accounted for approximately 18 percent of all of California's one-hour scripted shows last year.

### CALIFORNIA ONE-HOUR SERIES: NETWORK, CABLE AND DIGITAL



California can credit its good fortune to the California Film & Television Tax Credit Program. Under the improved 2.0 program, enacted in 2014, eligibility for one-hour series applies to all shows regardless of distribution media. Under the original program enacted in 2009, only new basic cable series and series for any distribution outlet relocating to California were eligible for the incentive. During 2018-19, a total of 27 incentivized shows are enrolled in the state program.



## PROJECTS RECEIVING THE CALIFORNIA FILM & TELEVISION TAX CREDIT

PROJECT TITLE	PLATFORM	CAST	CREW	EXTRAS	TOTAL QUALIFIED EXPENDITURES	
<i>American Horror Story S8</i>	FOX	225	196	2090	\$36,568,907	Broadcast
<i>Crazy Ex Girlfriend S4</i>	CW	8	260	2430	\$41,195,482	
<i>Good Girls S2</i>	NBC	9	235	3900	\$37,177,563	
<i>S.W.A.T. S2</i>	CBS	728	220	8952	\$77,090,550	
<i>The Orville S2</i>	FOX	232	281	3696	\$69,168,711	
<i>The Rookie 1</i>	ABC	156	150	8690	\$38,688,655	
<i>This Is Us S3</i>	NBC	327	201	3624	\$56,668,752	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1,685</b>	<b>1,543</b>	<b>33,382</b>	<b>\$356,558,620</b>	
<i>American Princess 1</i>	Lifetime	249	154	1030	\$22,307,370	Cable
<i>Animal Kingdom S4</i>	USA	160	175	2249	\$36,950,534	
<i>Ballers S5</i>	HBO	106	210	4624	\$35,293,318	
<i>Euphoria 1</i>	HBO	149	235	3586	\$41,626,754	
<i>Good Trouble 1</i>	Freeform	271	182	2314	\$20,708,808	
<i>I'm Dying Up Here 2</i>	Showtime	263	125	6204	\$36,494,975	
<i>Legion S3</i>	FX	30	118	1600	\$43,699,594	
<i>Mayans MC 1</i>	FX	164	125	2628	\$35,099,465	
<i>Sharp Objects S1</i>	HBO	120	159	2985	\$26,460,570	
<i>Shooter 3</i>	USA	65	175	2225	\$40,669,646	
<i>Snowfall S3</i>	FX	85	125	2050	\$35,329,331	
<i>The Affair S5</i>	Showtime	171	85	3420	\$37,994,527	
<i>Veep 7</i>	HBO	462	195	3960	\$36,110,247	
<i>Westworld S3</i>	HBO	75	200	7300	\$115,334,874	
<i>You S2</i>	Lifetime	200	175	3160	\$24,249,497	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2,570</b>	<b>49,335</b>	<b>2,438</b>	<b>\$588,329,510</b>	
<i>13 Reasons Why S3</i>	Netflix	80	175	9945	\$60,172,610	Digital
<i>Lucifer S4</i>	Netflix	164	120	5984	\$35,781,831	
<i>Sneaky Pete S3</i>	Amazon	236	220	2510	\$36,817,232	
<i>Strange Angel 1</i>	CBS All Access	125	300	3100	\$38,463,025	
<i>The OA S2</i>	Netflix	77	350	2664	\$32,811,866	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>682</b>	<b>1,165</b>	<b>24,203</b>	<b>\$204,046,564</b>	
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>		<b>4,937</b>	<b>5,146</b>	<b>106,920</b>	<b>\$1,148,934,694</b>	

The impact these incentivized series (including the two half-hour incentivized series *Ballers* and *Veep*) have in California is significant; according to the California Film Commission, they generated a combined qualified in-state spend of nearly \$1.2 billion during the first three years of the program. Assuming an average per-season budget of \$50 million for the 42 non-incentivized one-hour scripted series shooting in the state, we estimate the total annual direct production spend for California-based one-hour series at \$3.83 billion.

While California is no longer home to a significant share of the big-budget feature films that are produced each year, scripted one-hour series make up for much of the lost economic impact from those major films that film outside the state. A single season of qualified spending by *The Orville* (\$69,000,00) and *Westworld* (\$115,000,000) combined will spend nearly as much, if not more, than many big-budget films.

In fact, only 10 of the top 100 films at the North American box office in 2017 had budgets greater than \$184 million, and unlike many big-budget films, these shows can come back for multiple seasons.

The amount above does not include the direct production spending for the 99 (30 network and 69 cable & digital) scripted half-hour series (not including *Ballers* and *Veep*) that do not receive an incentive benefit and are also based in California. The average cost to produce each episode of these half-hour shows averages \$2 to \$3 million on most series. FilmLA estimates these 99 series will generate an additional \$3.05 billion in direct spending in the upcoming season.

All told, we estimate the combined direct spend of the scripted one-hour and half-hour series based in California at \$6.88 billion in 2018–19. This amount does not include spending by the numerous animated series produced in the state or spending by game shows, talk shows, talent shows and dozens of reality shows that are not the focus of this report, but also call California home.

## NEW PROJECTS BY LOCATION

As previously noted in this report, 159 new projects, including traditional pilots and straight to series orders, were introduced in the 2017–18 development cycle. Out of those 159 projects, 65 (21 one-hour, 44 half-hour) were filmed on California streets and stages.

This represents a 4 percent decrease from last year, when 68 projects filmed here. In terms of overall market share, California captured 41 percent of all new projects in the current development cycle, which is an improvement over the prior two years, when the state’s share was below 40 percent.

New project production is worthy of study because the activity creates significant economic benefits for the hosting region. The average one-hour pilot project can directly employ 150-750+ people for the duration of the shoot, which typically spans 10-20 days.

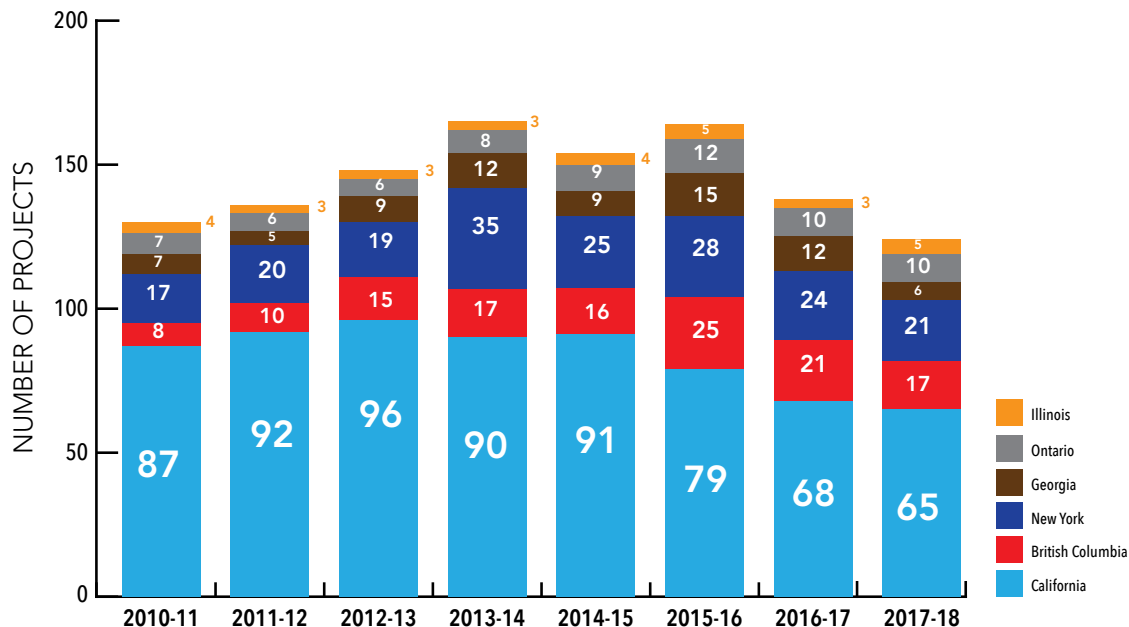
Typical production costs for a show’s first episode, having risen over the years, now average about \$3 million (for half-hour projects) and \$6 million to \$9 million (for one-hour projects).

FilmLA estimates that approximately \$290 million was spent on new television projects in California during the 2017–18 development cycle. By comparison, a total of \$303 million was spent in the state during the prior cycle on new television projects.

Other locations are seeing benefits from hosting new projects, too. In the 2017–18 development cycle, there were 94 projects produced outside California in competing jurisdictions; some form of film production incentive was available in every one of these jurisdictions. Other factors influencing producers’ choice of production location include the availability of cast and trained crew, and access to production infrastructure.

After California, the top competitors for new project production in 2017–18 were New York (21 projects), British Columbia (17 projects) and Ontario (10 projects). Also of note are Georgia and Illinois, which hosted six and five projects, respectively in 2017–18.

### TOP TELEVISION PROJECT LOCATIONS, BY SHOW COUNT



New York, Georgia and British Columbia all saw a decline in the number of new projects produced compared to the prior year. Georgia experienced a 50 percent drop, going from 12 projects in 2016–17 to just six during the 2017–18 cycle. British Columbia declined by 19 percent, going from 21 projects in 2016–17 to 17 projects in 2017–18. Since both jurisdictions reported record levels of production spending last year (\$2.7 billion in Georgia and \$3.4 billion CAD in British Columbia), and both have competitive film incentive programs in place, it’s unlikely this signals any long-term drop in these jurisdictions’ challenge to California.

## NEW PROJECTS BY DURATION

In 2017–18, California captured nearly 20 percent (21 count) of new one-hour projects. While it was not the lowest share for one-hour projects on record<sup>12</sup>, California's present share is well below its peak in 2006–07, when the state's share was a commanding 63 percent. Much like feature films, new one-hour projects are usually produced in jurisdictions where film incentives are available. California's considerable loss of one-hour project share is directly tied to incentive-fueled competition.

In 2017–18, the top five production centers in North America (California, New York, British Columbia, Ontario, Georgia) accounted for 68 of the 106 new one-hour projects, which represents a combined share of approximately 64 percent of new one-hour projects produced during the cycle. During the 2016–17 and 2015–16 cycles, these same five locations accounted for 68 percent and 70 percent, respectively, for one-hour projects produced during those periods.

The number of new half-hour projects produced in California was 44 in 2017–18 compared to 46 in the previous cycle, a decrease of 4 percent. California's overall share of new half-hour projects climbed to 83 percent in 2017–18, which is the first time the state's share for half-hour projects has been above 80 percent in the last five years.

California's status as the premier production center for new television projects continues to hinge on the industry's willingness to produce half-hour projects in the state. Competitive film incentive programs in other locations have not been very successful at siphoning half-hour production from California.

---

<sup>12</sup> During the 2013/14 cycle, California's share of one-hour projects was 17 percent.

## CONCLUSION

The television production landscape and the trends that shape it today are anything but static. The emergence of digital networks as original content producers, a breathtaking increase in the number of scripted series in production, and the still-growing trend away from a traditional pilot season in favor of straight-to-series orders all underscore an obvious fact: the current production landscape is incredibly dynamic.

Equally dynamic is the shifting competitive landscape among top competitors for television work. The inherent advantages of established production centers like California, New York and Vancouver continue to make these places attractive for new projects and full series. Nonetheless, the combination of film incentive programs and infrastructure availability continues to fuel interest in filming elsewhere.

Finally, while California's share of new project production is below historic highs, the current volume of scripted series production in the state places it far ahead of even its closest rivals. With a solid California Film & Television Tax Credit Program in place through 2024, the Golden State's standing as the world's top television production center is reaffirmed.





## ABOUT THIS REPORT

For more than a decade, FILMLA, INC® Research has tracked television projects in development and has published several reports on this topic, including its *2017 Pilot Production Report*. Over time, the scope of FilmLA's tracking and reporting effort has grown.

While pilots and straight-to-series orders remain a significant part of FilmLA's tracking efforts, the *2018 Television Report* offers a broader look at the overall television landscape, including notable trends, the impact of digital streaming services on the industry and the overall scripted television landscape both in California and jurisdictions across the world.

In prior reports, FilmLA used the term "television pilot" (or simply, "pilot") to refer to all original scripted pilot and shorter-length presentations, as well as the first episode of any new episodic show ordered "straight-to-series." Beginning with this report, the term "pilot" has been replaced with "New Project", a term that is equally encompassing, but less ambiguous. Past FilmLA reports also made a distinction between drama projects (which were typically one hour in duration, less commercial time) and comedy projects (typically one half-hour in duration). Following the advent of content that blurs the genre line (i.e., so-called "dramadies"), FilmLA now categorizes projects by running length.

FilmLA's series and new project counts within a development cycle include both stage-based and location-based projects produced in any location, of any running duration, intended for primetime airing on broadcast networks or cable networks, or online streaming services targeting U.S. audiences. Our counts include all series of which FilmLA is made aware through primary research (direct contact with studios, producers and film commissions, plus review of film permit records) and secondary research (industry trade publications, online subscription databases). Our aim in supplying these counts is to be thorough; errors of omission are, however, possible.

Except for estimates attributable directly to FilmLA and labeled as such in the text, all budget and spending figures referenced in this report were obtained from film incentive progress reports issued by state and foreign government jurisdictions, reputable news sources, or subscription databases, as attributed via footnote.

## SOURCES

### Annual Film Incentive Transparency Reports:

California  
Louisiana  
New York

### Other:

### Online Databases:

StudioSystem  
Development Leads  
IMDbPro

California Film Commission  
Louisiana Department of Economic Development  
CreativeBC  
British Film Institute  
Major news & media outlets







6255 W. Sunset Blvd.  
12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Hollywood, CA 90028

[FilmLA.com](http://FilmLA.com)