



# The Ashgate Research Companion to Fan Cultures (Ashgate Research Companions)

*Andreas Widholm*

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Fans constitute a very special kind of audience. They have been marginalized, ridiculed and stigmatized, yet at the same time they seem to represent the vanguard of new relationships with and within the media. 'Participatory culture' has become the new normative standard. Concepts derived from early fan studies, such as transmedial storytelling and co-creation, are now the standard fare of journalism and marketing text books alike. Indeed, usage of the word fan has become ubiquitous. The Ashgate Research Companion to Fan Cultures problematizes this exaltation of fans and offers a comprehensive examination of the current state of the field. Bringing together the latest international research, it explores the conceptualization of 'the fan' and the significance of relationships between fans and producers, with particular attention to the intersection between online spaces and offline places.

The twenty-two chapters of this volume elucidate the key themes of the fan studies vernacular. As the contributing authors draw from recent empirical work around the globe, the book provides fresh insights and innovative angles on the latest developments within fan cultures, both online and offline. Because the volume is specifically set up as companion for researchers, the chapters include recommendations for the further study of fan cultures. As such, it represents an essential reference volume for researchers and scholars in the fields of cultural and media studies, communication, cultural geography and the sociology of culture.

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