



NEWS RELEASE

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New FilmDis Study Examines Disability Representation on TV for the 2018/2019 Season *Out of 180 shows, 151 feature at least one disabled Bit character.*

Detroit, Michigan – The media monitoring organization FilmDis is releasing their inaugural annual study into disability representation on television. The organization watched 180 shows, examining all aspects of representation to determine where disability representation is, and where representation is lacking.

Here are some key findings:

- FilmDis watched 180 TV shows premiering from March 2018 to March 2019 and 151 of those shows featured a character with a disability
- Despite disabled people representing people of all races, sexual orientations, and gender identities, viewers are more likely to see disabled cisgender white men more than any other group with 261 characters out of 708
- LGBTQIA representation is practically nonexistent, with just 36 LGBTQIA disabled characters out of 708
- In categorizing the representation of disability, most disabled characters fell into the following categories: Alcoholism/Addiction (156 characters), Chronic Health (109 characters), Multiply-Disabled (77 characters), Mental Health diagnosis (including PTSD, Anxiety, Depression, etc.) (65 characters), and Physically Disabled (64 characters).
- Underserved representation includes Autistic (14 characters), Blind/Low Vision (13 characters), Little People (10 characters), Down Syndrome (6 characters), Deaf (5 characters), Learning Disabilities (4 characters), and ADHD (2 characters).
- In the 180 shows, characters from Extras to Lead roles are counted as long as they are disabled. While there is more representation than most people think, it is often embedded in **disabled mimicry** (when nondisabled actors play disabled roles)
- FilmDis calls on studios and networks to utilize more disabled talent in front of and behind the camera in order to create a more solid foundation of authenticity

Read the full report here: <http://filmdis.com/our-work/research-projects/>

FilmDis is calling on television studios, producers, and creatives to consult, utilize, and employ disabled creatives. Research shows that stories involving disabled characters hold the attention of viewers, but often these portrayals are written, directed by, and star people that are nondisabled. The lack of authenticity bleeds through to the final product creating harmful and hurtful representation that affects the lives of actual disabled people.

FilmDis completed this research study with zero funding, which is why they were only able to watch 180 out of 500+ shows. Please help contribute to the 2019-2020 FilmDis Study into Disability Representation [HERE](#).

For more information on thi study, or to work with FilmDis on your next Film, Television, or other media project email Ashtyn at info@filmdis.com.

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About FilmDis

FilmDis is a media monitoring organization formed by Ashtyn Law & Dominick Evans that consults with entertainment professionals to improve the quality of disabled representation in film and television. The main goal is to cut down on inspiration porn, disabled mimicry, and the narrative that disabled people are pity-inducing, helpless, and unable to participate in stories about them. Please visit [FilmDis](#) to learn more about the work we do.

About Ashtyn Law

Ashtyn Law is one of the cofounders of FilmDis. Ashtyn went to school for English and Screenwriting. She has written multiple short films, produced new media for the web, and has worked with PR companies for Sony, 20th Century Fox, Disney, HBO, Showtime, Microsoft, and CBS, reviewing and evaluating media they produced. She started FilmDis with the desire to help studios craft more authentic, inclusive disability representation.