

# Conclusion

## *"It's Not a Television Show"*

Despite this book's continued insistence that *Star Trek* must be considered as a television show, *Star Trek* has not been a television show, or at least a television show producing original weekly episodes, since *Enterprise's* crash landing in 2005. But as we argue in the book's introduction, *Star Trek* provides an excellent case study for illuminating the American television industry's past—its modes of production and narrative conventions during the classic network and multichannel eras. In the present, CBS monetizes the *Star Trek* library and intellectual property in conformity with the characteristic practices of the postnetwork era. And there may well be a future; media commentators and fans (sometimes an overlapping category) continue to hope for a new television series, rumors of which abound on the Internet. This conclusion summarizes the previous chapters' insights into *Star Trek* television's past, updates the story by examining *Star Trek* television's present, and speculates about *Star Trek* television's future and legacy.

### THE PAST

*Star Trek's* permeation of popular culture, its longevity, its profitability, and Gene Roddenberry's cultivation of his producer brand have all encouraged an almost mythic perception of *TOS* and its creator in popular and even in some academic circles. *Star Trek* has often been viewed as an extraordinary phenomenon, but rarely as a commonplace television product. Roddenberry certainly deserves credit for the initial concept of an adult program featuring a starship and its crew exploring the galaxy. To get this concept into production, however, Roddenberry had to conform to the standard industrial practices of the era and, we suspect, might not have managed to do so without the crucial intervention of Herbert Solow or, at least, of someone