



Literature Preview

This term may need some breaker down 245

How have ~~streaming services such as~~ Netflix affected the monetization avenues of film/television studios?

Books

seems like your focus is specifically on Netflix, right? So refno? to reflect that maybe...

Ulin, Jeffrey. *The Business of Media Distribution: Monetizing Film, TV and Video Content in an Online World*. CRC Press, 2013.

The Business of Media Distribution is an introduction to the mechanics of entertainment monetization from concept to profit written by a former head of distribution at Lucasfilm. In researching how Netflix is shaping the way distributors are profiting today, I need to make sure I have at least a basic understanding of where the industry is coming from and all the stages in the generation of said profit. With the exception of one or two subsections on the more intricate legal and/or financial components of distribution and creation, the book should prove to be a readily digestible source of foundational information on how studios actually make money off of films and television shows. Ulin, also a former senior-executive in charge of international distribution at Universal and Paramount, includes a particularly pertinent chapter on services like Netflix, titled, "Internet Distribution, Downloads, and On-Demand Streaming – A New Paradigm," that should prove beneficial in determining where Netflix fits in from the perspective of an 'industry insider' like Ulin. One of my sub-questions is "Who is making the most money off of streaming and what impact will that have on the future of entertainment distribution?" This book's purpose is to prepare the reader, given enough evidence, to be in a position to answer that question. For a topic dependent largely on the published opinions of individuals in periodicals, The Business of Media Distribution provides an essential foundation of the knowledge I will need to objectively synthesize an argument from my other various sources. There is also a PDF version online, which is great!

Articles

Carr, David. "Giving Viewers What They Want." *The New York Times*. The New York Times Company, 24 Feb. 2013. Web.

"Giving Viewers What They Want" examines Netflix's programming development strategy in a larger, marketwide context and evaluates its relative advantage as an aggregator of Big Data. Carr includes various metrics collected by Netflix such as the number of "plays," pauses and rewinds per user per day in order to emphasize the intricacy and depth of the company's data collecting services. Applying the aggregation of said metrics, Netflix has created and bought universally acclaimed original programming like the Emmy award winning shows *House of Cards* and *Orange Is the New Black*. David Carr was a famed journalist and columnist for The New York Times who also held a position as the Lack Professor of Media Studies at Boston University, where he taught part time. Because "Giving Viewers What They Want" was published in The New York Times, the facts, studies, and other

information included in the article can be considered accurate and reliable. The article helps inform one of my subtopics, the competitive edge of streaming services like Netflix, by identifying Big Data collection and availability as a serious strategic advantage over the traditional studio model.

Surowiecki, James. "Content and Its Discontents." *The New Yorker*. Condé Nast Digital, 20 Oct. 2014.

Web.

In "Content and Its Discontents," James Surowiecki attacks public perception of the Netflix model, arguing that "innovative" and "disruptive" are misleading adjectives to describe Netflix's current monetization platform. Rather, Surowiecki suggests, Netflix has adapted a traditional "pay-TV" service model not at all unlike current competitors HBO and Showtime. Furthermore, according to Surowiecki, the market Netflix commands is actually quite accessible, and other streaming services like Amazon Prime will limit long-term profits. What's especially valuable about "Content and Its Discontents," if not already apparent, is its position as a sort of antithesis to my existing pool of sources/arguments. Surowiecki, a journalist and columnist at The New Yorker, provides a more somber evaluation of Netflix at the end of 2014 than most of my other sources; furthermore, it helps to address my subtopic on the extent Netflix has cornered the digital video streaming market it itself opened in 2007. Published in The New Yorker, all information and interviews in the article can be considered reliable.

Susman, Gary. "The Future of Movies: Will Netflix Become the Next Big Hollywood Studio?" *Rolling*

Stone. Rolling Stone, 5 July 2013. Web.

Gary Susman, in "The Future of Movies," looks at Netflix's foray into original, feature length films and speculates on the company's long-term strategy for original film programming. Susman is a columnist and blogger at Rolling Stone, Time, and Moviefone who has worked as an editor, reporter, and critic at other points in his career, according to his profile at Moviefone. While perhaps not as accomplished as the other authors behind my existing sources, Susman offers a unique perspective piece on Netflix's redefinition of cinema and the only piece so far predicting the ascension of Netflix into the old-world Hollywood ecosystem. "The Future of Movies" helps address an essential subtopic regarding Netflix's place, if present, in the existing studio system. Because it was published in Rolling Stone online, the validity of its sources and information fall into what I would consider "likely reliable." Regardless, the factual claims made by Susman in "The Future of Movies" are easily verifiable through a simple Google search.

Wu, Tim. "Netflix's Secret Special Algorithm Is a Human." *The New Yorker*. Condé Nast Digital, 27

Jan 2015. Web.

In "Netflix's Secret Special Algorithm Is a Human," Tim Wu expands on Carr's evaluation of Netflix's Big Data analytics, questioning if data really is the end-all and be-all of successful content creation.

Wu, professor at Columbia Law School and director of the Poliak Center for the First Amendment at the Columbia School of Journalism (he also coined the phrase Net Neutrality), concludes that data is only part of the equation behind successful programming and that careful content curation composes at least the other half. The implication of Wu's argument is that the market is not solely exclusive to massive data aggregators like Amazon and Netflix (i.e. studios reliant on metrics like Nielson ratings can still thrive, even in the face of new competition). "Netflix's Secret Special Algorithm Is a Human" really helps to address my essential question of how companies like Netflix are affecting the monetization avenues of film/television studios by providing a counter-argument to the "data, data, data" proposition originally put forth by Carr. It also informs the aforementioned subtopic on Netflix's competitive edge by identifying Netflix's chief content officer, Tom Sarandos, as the secret ingredient, not the data. Published in The New Yorker, I can say with certainty the information presented by Wu has been checked for accuracy and that "Netflix's Secret Special Algorithm" is reliable.

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