

## Chapter One

### Selection

The first step in building a streaming video collection is to determine which titles should be selected for streaming. Should preference be given to certain vendors, genres, or subject areas? Several options are open to libraries-- from purchasing digital rights for individual video titles to leasing a large collection of streamed titles-- and each offers benefits.

### *Individual titles*

Faculty recommendation and usage statistics are the two most important factors in selecting individual titles for streaming. Because of the cost-prohibitive and potentially time-consuming nature of streaming licenses for individual titles, it is unlikely that title-by-title streaming will be the default format for collecting for many more years. However, as users become more familiar with streaming video through services like Netflix, iTunes and Amazon Instant, requests for streaming materials are bound to increase. It is necessary to determine what format is the best choice for any given title being added to the collection. It is also helpful to have an up-to-date collection development policy that addresses streaming video and under what circumstances streaming is to be considered (or required). What may be appropriate for your library will likely vary a great deal from what might be appropriate elsewhere. However, there are a few common scenarios that might result in the acquisition of a streaming license:

1. A faculty member identifies a new title and requests that the title be purchased and made available to her students in the institution's course or learning management system such as Blackboard, Moodle, Canvas, Desire2Learn, Sakai.

2. A faculty member requests that a title already available in a physical format in the library's collection be made available via streaming.
3. The media librarian or reserve specialist identifies a title, which because of high circulation or frequent reserve requests, warrants a streaming license. In this case, a streaming license would be acquired in lieu of purchasing an additional physical copy.

An institution with a heavy focus on distance education, for example, might find streaming to be a good option in more cases than a library with a small centrally located population. A library may also use circulation and reserves data to identify good candidates for streaming. Titles used by multiple professors are good choices; titles used in classes with high enrollment are as well. Most libraries have at least a few videos that are hard to keep on the shelf, especially at certain points in the semester. When considering introducing streaming media to a library, these heavy-use titles are a good place to start.

More difficult are decisions involving titles that are new acquisitions. If one does not already know that a title will be popular and heavily used, it can be difficult to decide if it is worth the extra time and expense to acquire the streaming rights. The decision of whether or not to acquire digital rights for an individual title may be guided by a faculty member's preference alone or influenced by collections data as well. Consider, for example, how well similar titles circulate or the history of use by a faculty member's students. Will a title be used in distance education or an online class? When considering whether to buy a streaming license and a physical copy of a title or streaming license alone, the choice may be even more unclear. Having a physical copy is insurance that may be worth the investment.

### *Subscription Packages and Purchased Collections*

When evaluating a video collection for purchase or lease, the criteria are by necessity somewhat different than for the selection of individual titles. Collections are significantly more expensive than individual titles and, while individual titles may or may not require on-going costs, collections often will-- whether in the form of a subscription or an annual hosting fee. One might find that evaluating this type of resource has more in common with evaluating databases.

Vendors are usually more than happy to arrange a trial for their product. These generally last 30 days and are an opportunity to assess not only how the product performs, but to build excitement and interest among users. Vendors will often have marketing materials they can supply to help get the word out about an ongoing trial or a new acquisition. Some factors to look for during a trial include:

- Does the platform work the way you think it should?
- If there are problems, is technical support responsive?
- Are there thorough help files?
- Is the content valuable to your users?
- Can the content be used in all the ways patrons need to use it (i.e. embedding, clipping, creating playlists)?

Other technical considerations to evaluate during a trial or before renewing will be explored more thoroughly in the chapter on support.

### *Independent Film Distributors and Major Studios*

A serious hurdle to a library's efforts to move toward a streaming collection is that major studios are not in the business of licensing streaming rights for their titles to academic markets. Independent distributors, who have long relied on libraries as their main customers, have been

far quicker to move into the streaming market for libraries. While there are many wonderful documentary and feature films available through independent distributors, a library is likely to find that these catalogs address only a fraction of the films to which its patrons want access. Unfortunately, there are few options for streaming these major-market titles to a library community.

There are a number of companies in the business of streaming films for the home market; librarians, faculty, and students are all likely familiar with Netflix, Amazon Instant, Hulu and Crackle. Popular titles are available from these companies for inexpensive monthly subscription or one-time purchase costs. Before referring users to these services, however, one should be familiar with their terms of service and encourage the user to be familiar with these terms as well. Screening a film from one of these companies in a class may violate the terms of service. Additionally, there are a few vendors attempting to address libraries' needs to provide streaming access to popular or feature titles and to provide licenses for individual titles on a per semester basis. Currently, this is a very limited marketplace with few options to meet educational needs. However, it is possible that more vendors will provide streaming access to popular and feature films in the near future.