

# You've Licensed It. Now What?

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Unfortunately, the "build it and they will come" phenomenon does not apply to library media collections. The active marketing of new library resources is one of the necessary chores to ensure that patrons know about and use the resources. This is especially true about new media formats, and in particular the relatively new resource of streaming media. This paper will look at the challenges libraries face in promoting the use of streaming media collections, and strategies employed by academic libraries to meet that challenge.

## A framework for thinking about library marketing

Much of the literature related to the marketing of electronic resources for libraries mentions the SWOT analysis (Dubicki 2009, Smith 2011). A SWOT analysis is a structured planning method used to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats involved in a project (Rogers, 2001). It involves specifying the objective of the project (in our case, marketing to the library's primary users, faculty and students) and identifying the internal and external factors that are favorable and unfavorable to achieve that objective (in our case, increased use of licensed video content). Strengths and weaknesses are internal factors: strengths are characteristics of the project that give it an advantage over others; weaknesses are characteristics that place the project at a disadvantage relative to others. Opportunities and threats are external factors: opportunities are elements that the project could exploit to its advantage, and threats are elements in the environment that could cause trouble for the project. Identification of these critical elements provides a foundation for strategic marketing planning.

## SWOT Analysis

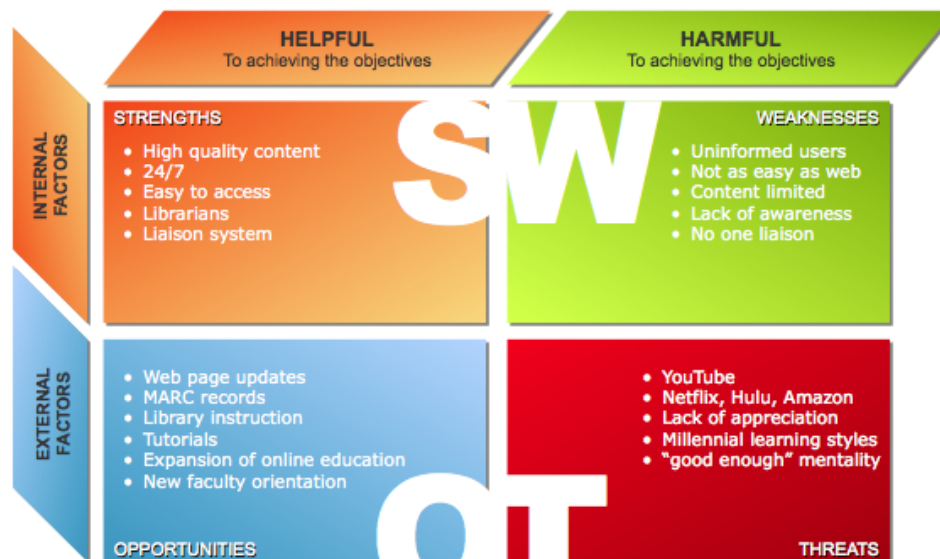


Figure 1 (SWOT Analysis by [www.showeet.com](http://www.showeet.com) used under CC BY.)

When looking at marketing streaming video resources, the strengths are easy to outline: Libraries offer high quality, authoritative content in easy-to-access, 24/7 format; skilled librarians are available to teach users about these resources; many libraries have a liaison system in place where liaisons serve as marketers to faculty, etc.

Weaknesses are unfortunately even easier to outline: users may need training, the content is not as easy to use as other web resources, we can't own or offer access to everything, there is a lack of awareness on part of students and faculty, many libraries have subject liaisons for each department or school, but video content does not have a particular liaison (so typically the media librarian must try to reach all departments and schools, rather than targeting a select few).

The library's opportunities are many. The library's home page and LibGuides can be constantly updated to reflect new acquisitions. MARC records, offered by most vendors, make the videos available via our online catalogs and discovery platforms for "one stop shopping." These resources can be highlighted in library instruction sessions, and librarians have the opportunity to create classes or tutorials specifically geared to video resources. Online education is expanding and thus the need for streaming content should be increasing. Librarians have opportunities to reach out to new faculty in orientation sessions and so on.

Threats, however, are also many. Online services like YouTube, Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hulu, as well as file sharing sites are familiar and easier to use and perhaps more convenient than the library's video offerings. Students don't automatically appreciate the library's resources as superior research tools. Millennial learning patterns (e.g., peer-to-peer teaching and self-teaching behavior) and the "good enough" mentality also present obstacles (Smith 2011).

So given that libraries take the leap of faith and license as many titles as possible, what are strategies that libraries can use to maximize the use the resources they have assembled? How can they maximize the strengths, leverage the opportunities, minimize the weaknesses and counter the threats facing the media collection?

### **The University of North Carolina at Greensboro case**

The University Libraries of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro have offered streaming film options to their users for years, and recently the resources offered have increased in response to research needs, student use of media, expansion of online instruction, shifting of face-to-face instruction to online classes, and the flipped classroom model with students viewing films outside of class for later discussion as a group. Faculty need to know the range of options available to them. In a continuing economic climate of reduced collections budgets, getting the maximum use from resources is crucial.

Information on licensed streaming media is gathered in a LibGuide that includes lists of resources, help for faculty on embedding links in the learning management system, acquisition policies, and notes on public performance rights. A copyright guide for the campus has a section devoted to instructors. It offers guidance on Fair Use, the TEACH Act, and video in the classroom. When librarians receive inquiries from faculty, the LibGuide and copyright information can be shared to help with planning how media is used in the curriculum as well as for campus events.

At the start of the 2014-15 academic year, the University Libraries arranged for webinars by representatives from Docuseek2, Kanopy, and Alexander Street Press. Library Liaisons to academic

departments and any staff who work with faculty on acquiring or scheduling media were invited. The sessions offered a chance to see what kinds of films and which producers were available from each source. The method that the Libraries use to acquire and pay for each platform varies – evidence based, patron driven acquisition, and purchase with annual hosting fees – and the group conversation made that easier to understand.

Following the webinar sessions Library Liaisons were able to share information with faculty representatives from the departments, offering links to specific films or collections and simply promoting the streaming films to encourage use.

A Spotlight section on the University Libraries home page includes graphics and links to streaming film platforms in rotation with other current awareness items as a means of reaching visitors to the web site.

In early spring 2015, the University Libraries will host a Faculty Center Takeover event. These opportunities for faculty to gather informally to meet, socialize, share food and drink, and learn about services and organizations across campus are scheduled one afternoon each month. The Libraries' event will include a demonstration on streaming film.

One of the Libraries' priorities for the academic year strategic plan includes promoting streaming films to faculty to increase awareness and usage. Formalizing the effort in that way makes it clear that the Libraries intend to take action in marketing those resources. The response from faculty will be invaluable in making future selection decisions.

### **The University of Tennessee in Knoxville case**

The University of Tennessee in Knoxville is a public land grant university with an FTE of 26,000. While most classes at UT are still predominantly face-to-face, the number of online classes is growing and several programs are online. Online, blended, distance, and even flipped classes need electronic resources from the Library, including streamed video. The UT Libraries has been working to meet these needs. The question with video streaming (and many other library resources) is: If you license it, will they use the resources? The answer is a qualified "yes."

While there is a need, and many times an articulated need, there is often a disconnect between what is available and student and instructor awareness of availability. So, they will only use it if there is a need, if it is accessible, *and above all, if they are aware that the Library has it.*

The UT Libraries licenses video collections from vendors such as Alexander Street Press, Films Media Group, Kanopy, and Criterion-on-Demand USA. Individual titles are licensed on platforms from Docuseek2, Residence Life Cinema, and New Day Digital. In addition, the Libraries has its own server for showing licensed steaming files, vendor provided or digitized in house, from Ambrose, Bullfrog, Insight Media, Kino, and many others.

Because these types of offerings are relatively new, at least in streaming format, colleges and universities find themselves in the position of having to promote their own materials. While new services have always needed to be promoted, users are often surprised and uninformed about the range of e-resources now available through libraries. For this reason, academic libraries are using more resources and techniques toward promoting the use of materials in an online environment. This

promotes use and improves return on investment. Many vendors are aware of this need and have been supplying resources to aid in promoting the use of their products.

At the UT Libraries, these resources are still promoted in many of the traditional ways. Instructor requested titles remain one of the best ways to guarantee usage. Word of mouth advertising works but is unpredictable. Including the titles and links in the Library's catalog with MARC records, and in some cases individual cataloging, increases discoverability. LibGuides both promote collections and provide contact information for questions or problems. The UT Libraries' databases site also lists all video streaming collections and platforms at the collection level.

There are other strategies for advertising collections and for encouraging the promotion of streaming collections. First, doing a trial of a video streaming collection can be useful in increasing awareness, especially if it is requested by a subject librarian or a discipline-based faculty member. Never assume that simply linking to a trial will get the resource noticed. Subject Librarians, in general, are good resources for promoting video streaming resources and enlisting them for this purpose ensures they themselves are aware of the collections. One successful way of promoting streaming collections internally has been to hold a "brown bag" session for librarians to learn about collections and platforms and to discuss how they might be used. A quick lunchtime presentation about new streaming resources is a relaxed way to introduce new types of resources in an informal environment.

Directly marketing to new faculty and graduate teaching assistants through orientations is another way to encourage the use of video streaming in the classroom. These are often groups who are interested in learning about resources for teaching support and may be more likely to readily adopt technology. At the UT Libraries, streaming collections are promoted as an important teaching resource in venues such as: new faculty orientation, Summer Teaching Institute (for new faculty and instructors), graduate teaching assistant (GTA) orientation, and the "Best Practices in Teaching Program" (teacher training program for GTAs). New faculty and GTAs are often more receptive to resources if they can see them in action. For this reason, we created a Prezi presentation demonstrating how streamed video could be integrated into a student's presentation, an assignment, and specific teaching situation.

Collections are also promoted to students. UT Libraries has two of its own Open Houses, one for graduates students and another for undergraduates for which video streaming gets its own table to show and tell about these resources. If possible, it is best to set up a monitor display to demonstrate films and special features to the students. Additional venues for reaching undergraduate students include: "Taste of Tennessee New Student Orientation," and other student events aimed at showcasing resources and services.

The Library also makes significant attempts at outreach and is fortunate to have two librarians dedicated to student outreach. Ingrid Ruffin has created a "Library Takeout" program focused on the Residence Halls and actively promotes some video collections to students in the dorms. Each month she also creates a marketing and communications display with chalk markers on a window in the central corridor of Hodges Library to help promote the feature film streaming collections.

While the library does create promotional materials, streaming vendors themselves often provide posters, fliers, image files, and other resources to help promote their video products. They are either available from their site, or by request from vendor representatives. Some vendors, like Films on Demand, have even created "Usage Booster" widgets that are subject-focused search boxes for their products that can be embedded in web pages. The important thing is to ask. While not all vendors have marketing kits and widgets, many have posters and handouts. Some don't, but most do.

While there is no “silver bullet” for video streaming promotion, it is important to be proactive in this endeavor so that more patrons can learn of existing resources. This will also encourage them to begin to look for and use other streaming resources.

### **The Docuseek2 case**

From the vendor perspective, there is obviously a financial interest in helping libraries promote their streaming collection. The rough math is summed up in the equation

$$\text{usage} = \text{renewals}$$

With the subscription licensing model, the vendor shares a mutual interest with the library of maximizing use of the resources.

There may be other considerations for vendors, though, besides the economic ones. From the perspective of the curator, whether at the library or the vendor, each title embodies a voice and an intention. The resources are intended to be (in the case of video) watched and appreciated. Viewing the films (and the same would hold true of other media) in theory will inform and enrich, and maybe even enthuse the viewer. The world, hopefully, will be a better place. The vendor and the librarian are two conductors on the road from the author to reader or producer to watcher.

The vendor can assist the library in promoting its materials in several ways. The minimal assistance is to provide MARC records, as well as other forms of metadata for third party discovery services that the library may use. The content must be discoverable before it can be found. Custom add-on tools, like Films Media Group's widgets can further enhance discoverability of the content. Once discovered, it is also essential for the vendor to provide easy to use tools to support integration into course pages and course management systems to facilitate use. Usability and reliability are important to ensure that the viewing experience is a positive one, and the patron returns for more.

The vendor can also actively assist the library in the promotion of content. The vendor can provide promotional materials, for example, in the form of flyers as mentioned above. Vendor-sourced tutorials and webinars provide another set of tools for the librarian-as-marketer.

Another level of support can come from website tools to assist not only the librarian-marketer, but users as well to leverage social media to spread the word about library content. This might include options to broadcast information about a resource via Twitter or Facebook, or to use email to share information about a specific resource or group of resources. Docuseek2, for example, provides a tool for librarians to email search results from within its web application. The librarian can search for titles on, say, environmental anthropology, and send the results to a professor, with the library's links to the resources.

Still another level of marketing support consists of direct communication between the vendor and faculty and students at the institution. Vendor direct mail or direct email marketing, as well as other forms of marketing to faculty is a traditional way of raising awareness of specific resources. Vendor presence at academic conferences is another traditional way of building interest in resources. These activities are typically undertaken to drive pre-sale or pre-license interest. But similar activities can be undertaken to drive "post-sale" interest -- driving use of the resource after it has been licensed.

For example, Docuseek2 has been experimenting with such post-sale marketing campaigns. Its distribution partners attend academic conferences, and collect the names of faculty interested in their films. Docuseek2 then emails the faculty at institutions that have licensed its content with specific instructions on accessing the films on their campus. Proactively, the company has screen-scraped faculty names and emails from institutional directories, focusing on key disciplines that match the foci of the Docuseek2 content. The company then individually emails faculty to alert them of the resource available to them, with links to the library's collection. In addition, the company has collected emails and social media information of student organizations in related areas. For example, the Docuseek2 streaming media collection includes a concentration of films about the environment and current environmental issues, so it looked for student organizations focused on the environment. The emails included search results for the organization's focus, including the campus link to the resources. Preliminary results of this campaign have been encouraging, with a strong increase in the number of views at the target institutions.

This experiment points to the potential of social media tools in micro-marketing to specific segments of the institutional audience and even individuals about single resources or logical groups of resources. These tools are relatively inexpensive to deploy, and the upside (e.g., the potential of a resource "going viral" on the campus) is great. The main cost associated with using social media tools is labor, and this can be an area where the vendor can help out.

## **Conclusion**

While libraries face challenges in building usage of a new medium like streaming video, strategic, active marketing by libraries, with support from vendors, can overcome these challenges. Time-tested marketing strategies, as well as leveraging new promotional tools can help the library attain the usage that justifies the investment in new media. If you license, with a little help, they *will* come.

## **References**

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*You've Licensed It. Now What?* was presented at a concurrent panel session at the 2014 Charleston Conference, Charleston, SC. The accompanying slides for the presentation are available at [http://misc.docuseek2.com/files/Charleston\\_2014\\_combined.pptx](http://misc.docuseek2.com/files/Charleston_2014_combined.pptx)

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