Video Streaming in Academic Libraries: Enabling Participation in a Democratic Society

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Introduction

Video Streaming in Academic Libraries
As education helps citizens participate fully in a democratic society, academic libraries provide support in this educational endeavor by providing students, faculty, staff and community members with access to cultural and informational resources. These resources provide information that helps citizens develop personally and professionally, preparing them to participate in their social, cultural, and professional communities. The use of streaming services also promotes critical thinking by encouraging users to curate their own knowledge, which is a valuable skill in participating in democratic activities. Keeping up with recent technologies, an increasing number of academic libraries are now turning to video streaming tools in order to provide access to educational and cultural materials.

Media Democratization: How Video Streaming Enables Participation in Democracy

Curating Information
Previously, large media conglomerates decided what audiovisual information users could view (Kandell, 2015). Now, with video streaming, the user can choose what information to seek and view, and the user can view that information from more locations and at more times than ever before:
- The user determines what information they want.
- The user seeks out that information using pertinent technology.
- The user can make their own informed opinions based on the information they found.
- These informed opinions then influence an individuals social and political choices.

Increasing Access
Video streaming, particularly in academic settings, can increase access to library materials and education. Users do not need to come to the library to acquire video. Video streaming increases access to:
- Distance users (Miller, 2013).
- Users with limited mobility (Miller, 2013).
- Users without optical drives, without televisions, without DVD readers

Interacting within Society
- Users can upload their own videos to be shared (i.e. on Youtube).
- Greater visibility and accountability for governments (Naim, 2007).
- Web 2.0 functions, like comments, allow users to remotely discuss, debate, interact with others (Naim, 2007) – activities crucial to participation in democratic societies.

Usage Statistics: Kanopy Streaming & DVD Circulation

UIUC has over 31,000 DVDs. Of these DVDs:
- 18% have never circulated
- 10% only circulated once
- 25% circulated 2 to 5 times

UIUC has access to over 16,000 films through Kanopy’s Patron-Driven Acquisitions (PDA) service. Of these films:
- 880 films were viewed by UIUC patrons
- 815 of those 880 viewed films.
- UIUC did not have to pay for because they did not exceed 3 views
- 65 of those 880 viewed films triggered the purchase of a license

The Rise of Streaming Videos in Academic Libraries

Current Trends in the U.S.
Americans are turning off their televisions and turning on their streaming devices more than ever before. According to Pew Research, 2/3 of Americans watched streaming videos in 2013, which is up from 40% in 2007 (Olimestad, 2014). In fact, 40% of American households had access to a subscription-based video on-demand service as of November 2014 (Nielsen, 2015).

The selection of streaming services is especially high amongst millennials. In a 2015 survey of 1,500 Americans aged 18-34, 81% use Youtube to stream videos, 79% subscribe to Netflix, and only 3% claimed to not stream videos at all (Beaver, 2015).

Academic Libraries Turning to Streaming
More academic libraries are choosing to provide streaming services for their patrons. In a 2013 survey of 336 academic libraries in the U.S., 70% featured streaming videos in their collection, up from 30% in 2010 (Farrelly, 2014).

Streaming is Far Superior to DVDs
- DVDs have a limited shelf-life, can be lost, and often require multiple copies to meet patrons’ needs. Streaming videos can be viewed by many patrons at once and cannot be damaged or lost as easily.
- DVDs grow expensive with shipping costs and buying multiple copies. Streaming one video typically costs less than checking out a DVD (Erdmann, 2015).

Who will Benefit from Streaming Videos?
1. Faculty, who demand videos in the classroom or want to explore content without purchasing it
2. Students, who prefer streaming devices to DVDs
3. The library, who will save money with a streaming collection

Reaching Out to Students: Creating a Marketing Strategy

Need for Outreach
Developing a marketing strategy is imperative when building a streaming video collection because without promotion, students and faculty will most likely be unaware that these materials exist.

What has Worked for Other Libraries?
In June 2014, the University of Massachusetts Amherst and Simmons College both began a promotional endeavor to increase awareness of the library’s streaming services. These institutions found that the most effective methods of promotion were emailing faculty members and including links in LibGuides (Erdmann, 2015).

How to get Started
- Send faculty and liaison emails about your new service.
- Create a LibGuide about the various streaming video collections, titles, or genres that your library offers.
- Hang flyers in the library building(s) and around campus.
- Promote the library’s new service through social media.
- Work with your library’s web team to get a link or widget to the streaming service on your library’s website.
- Add your streaming provider to your library’s list of databases.

References
Farrelly, D. & Hatchinson, J. (2014, Nov.). Academic Library Streaming Video: Key Findings from the National Survey. Against the Grain (26(5)), 73-75.

Acknowledgments
Thanks to:
- Michael Norman, Head of Content Access Management, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Library
- Virginia “Ginger” Schultz, Media Acquisitions Specialist, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Library
- Lynn Wiley, Head of Acquisitions, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Library

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Background
The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign is a public institution. Its University Library serves more than 43,000 students and more than 9,000 faculty and staff as well as community members (On-Campus, 2015). The Library is the second largest academic library in the U.S.

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) Library entered a licensing agreement with Kanopy, a video streaming service, in June 2015. Kanopy operates on a Patron-Driven Acquisitions (PDA) model, and provides yearly licenses for films with significant usage. Herein, we focus on Kanopy’s video streaming, though our research can be applied to various platforms.

Why Kanopy?
Due to high costs and industry factors, it is difficult for libraries to acquire streaming videos on their own. By partnering with Kanopy, the Library can offer our patrons access to a large collection of over 16,000 titles economically.