



for entertainment

Surfing for Summer Blockbusters

How to leverage your summer movies online



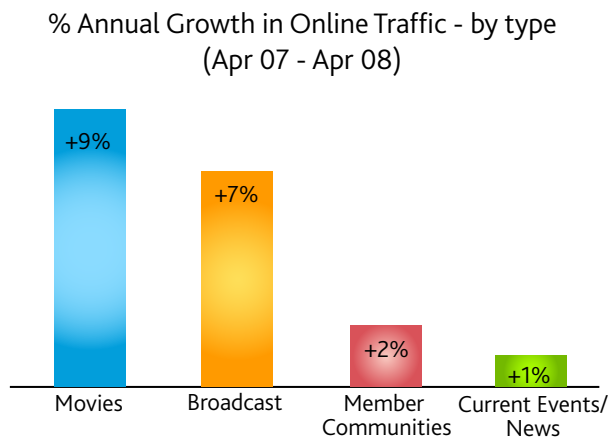
Industry Briefs

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Introduction

According to moviegoers, trailers and word of mouth are the most important information tools used in choosing a movie. The beauty of the Internet is that with web 2.0 technology moviegoers can do both of these activities online - they can watch trailers and see what other viewers thought. In fact, more and more sites are incorporating these types of interactive tools for moviegoers.

The demand for online movie content has been steadily growing. The online growth in traffic to movie related sites was 9% year over year which is higher than the growth in traffic to broadcast sites and member communities (social networking). This brief examines the four best strategies for taking advantage of these trends and leveraging summer movie releases online.



Methodology

For this report, we examined movies in Summer 2007 that made more than \$10M their opening weekend and were on more than 2,000 screens - this came out to a sample of 20 films.

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Where is the discussion happening?

Online movie conversations are extremely fragmented - the top 10 discussion sites make up only about 1/3 of the total discussions. The sites are also extremely varied and include insider blogs, fansites and gossip rags. This is interesting because studios can get a sense of where to link content. Since *Defamer* and other online gossip rags top the discussions, a studio can decide whether to downplay or highlight certain actors in a film depending on their level of controversy.

Top 5 Sites - by % of Total Discussion

Site	% of Discussion*
<i>Cinematical</i>	7%
<i>The Movie Blog</i>	5%
<i>Defamer</i> (LA Gossip Rag)	4%
<i>The-Leaky-Cauldron</i>	3%
<i>HPANA</i> (Harry Potter News)	3%

*Related to the movies in our sample

Which sites have the highest perceived value?

What is even more important than WHERE the discussion is happening is HOW the discussion is happening. Just because 7% of total movie discussion is happening at *Cinematical*, it doesn't mean studios should rush out and leak content there - it is better to first understand HOW the discussion is happening. A stronger indicator of site value is the number of links sourcing back to that site. For example, a discussion can be happening on *Cinematical* but bloggers may be linking back to *Internet Movie Database* (*IMDb*) content. In this chart we see more than 50% of movie discussion links source either the studio's original site or *IMDb*. In short, this means viewers perceive studio sites and *IMDb* as having the highest perceived value of content - they are the preferred resource for the majority of movie discussions.

Top 5 Sites - by % of Total Links

Site	% of links *
Studio Movie Site	29%
<i>IMDb</i>	25%
<i>MSN Movies</i>	10%
Apple Trailers	3%
<i>YouTube</i>	3%

*Related to the movies in our sample

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Where is the advertising occurring?

For the movies analyzed in our sample, *Myspace* was the top site for ad impressions - with almost 50% of total impressions. This is interesting because *Myspace* doesn't crack the top 5 (or even top 10) sites for either discussion or links. *IMDb*, a top valued movie site, only garnered 3% of total ad impressions. Marketers need to diversify and place their movie ads on multiple sites, especially sites top-of-mind with online movie fans.

Top 5 Sites - by % of Total Ad Impressions

Site	% of Impressions*
<i>Myspace</i>	46%
<i>Yahoo! (home page)</i>	8%
<i>YouTube</i>	7%
<i>NYTimes</i>	4%
<i>IMDb</i>	3%

*Related to the movies in our sample

The Summer Paradox

Summer is a gold mine for studios. Not only do most blockbusters happen during this time frame, a high level of users are online looking for movie content. However, there is a paradox from May to July as online ad impressions for new movie releases are at their lowest level for the year. How can we explain this? Most marketers assume people are out of their homes during the summer months and online advertising would be wasteful. However, there is a huge opportunity for studios to cut through the clutter by advertising online in the May to July time frame. Boosting advertising efforts online during the summer months may offer a strong advantage.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Online Activity	Avg	Avg	Low	Avg	Avg	Avg	High	Avg	Low	Low	Low	High
Online Advertising	Avg	Avg	Avg	Avg	Low	Low	Low	High	Low	High	High	Avg

↑
Largest Opportunity for marketers to optimize online efforts

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Summary

1) Know your metrics.

The value of site content can be measured by how often readers link to the site. This metric is different from where the discussion is happening. Even if the discussion is happening on website A, website B might be linked to the discussion. So it is important to understand not only where the discussion is happening, but to which sites the discussion is being linked. The bottom line is, when planning online marketing initiatives for your summer movie - use links as a currency.

2) Understand where the discussion is happening.

Movie discussions happen in a wide range of places online - blogs, fansites and gossip rags. Knowing where this discussion is occurring may help you take a two prong approach to marketing your movie. On one hand it may help you get a sense of which sites you should leak or provide content to. Since a high degree of movie chatter occurs on gossip rags, studios can trouble shoot early on if one of their lead actors is in the midst of a controversy. If a main actor is having a high level of either favorable or unfavorable publicity, a studio may choose to adjust their screen time in the trailers.

3) Feed the online machine.

Providing high value content on your site (e.g. trailers, details about cast and crew, etc) will ensure that you are featured in the online discussion. By providing high quality content, you will guarantee that moviegoers are linking to your site or viewing your links even when they are on other discussion boards.

4) Reconsider your summer assumptions.

The online movie audience is strong during the summer months, yet advertising for major studio release online lags during this period. The assumption summer moviegoers aren't online is wrong. May, June, and July are months with typically low online movie advertising - there is an opportunity to increase online advertising for your movies during these months to get through the clutter and reach the high online movie audience.

This information is from a larger Nielsen Online study on online movie marketing. For more information e-mail: more.preview@nielsen.com.

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