

Are Streaming Services Harming the Film and Television Industry?

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The meteoric rise of streaming platforms in the past 10 years has fundamentally changed the film and television industry and prompted a hot debate as to whether this digital shift is injuring traditional media. Although critics claim that streaming sites are destroying cinema theaters and stripping the legacy business models, a cautious study of recent peer-reviewed literature explains that the streaming effect on the film and television system is not so straightforward; it presents both threats and opportunities. In summary, streaming services are not so bad; however, they are a disruptive force that requires the industry to become more adaptable and be innovative once again.

First, it should be stated that streaming, or video-on-demand service, has broken the traditional methods of distribution of movies and television and questioned the old economic approaches. The list includes Netflix, Disney+, and Amazon Prime Video, which facilitated the way people consume content by offering an incredible variety of movies and shows anytime, regardless of the film's release date or their scheduling (Boccio, 2025). It has caused revenue streams to move beyond the box office and broadcast advertising to be more subscription and ad-supported platforms, making studios, cinemas, and networks rethink their financial strategies. According to Zhongyu & Hashim, 2025, the growth of streaming has caused the creation of alternative direct-to-consumer distribution models, which have smashed the traditional cinema paradigm and redefined production economics in the global market.

The major issue is that such interference can harm the movie theater attendance and the cinematic experience. Research indicates that younger viewers especially appreciate the convenience and affordability of streamlining as opposed to going to the movie theaters, a trend that the COVID-19 pandemic increased immensely (Deavours, 2023). Cinemas were previously

experiencing a drop in attendance across many regions even before the pandemic, and with the move to streaming, cinemas were further distracted. Such developments are supported by academic evaluations of global audiences and changes in the industry, which indicate that streaming has substantially modified the media consumption trends. The harm caused by streaming, however, simplifies a more complex industrial transformation.

Streaming has also broadened the creative possibilities and democratized access to content, which may not be able to compete elsewhere in the traditional systems. Since streaming platforms are not restricted to such geographic and time limits as theatrical distribution, they can bring different stories and niche genres to any audience worldwide. For example, studies on online streaming in Malaysia discovered that the internet has opened to diverse cinema genres and artistic productions so that audiences can now access works other than blockbusters in major film industry sectors (Deavours, 2023). Independent filmmakers, in most instances, have new avenues to access the viewers that do not necessarily involve costly and competitive theatrical releases.

Furthermore, streaming has increased the creation of content and business models. Original content is heavily invested in platforms, which compels the traditional studios to raise standards of storytelling to match the expectations of viewers. They also provide hybrid release models, perhaps theatrical/ streaming windows, balancing accessibility and box office revenue generation (Iliescu & Ioanid, 2024). This type of hybrid model has been more frequently embraced by larger studios to reach its maximum utilization but remains theatrical as an indication that they can coexist and not direct competition.

One can of course be concerned with cultural homogenization and the sideline of local industries within the worlds of global streaming powerhouses. According to research, OTTs

across the world might focus more on stories with universal global interest, and they might miss departing with culturally relevant local content (Dash, 2025). These problems necessitate considerate industry and policy solutions, including the provision of local production quotas or funding structures.

In conclusion, streaming services do not necessarily pose a serious threat to the film and television sector; on the contrary, they are a source of transformation that plays with the established forms of business and have considerable advantages in terms of reach to the audience, diversity of creativity, and innovative means of production. However, the real challenge to the industry is not the opposition to the streaming boom, but the flexibility and enduring ability to integrate digital development with preservation of the theatrical experiences and local narratives.

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