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The Mpaa Allows Movie Downloads– Are They Worth Your Dime?

By Madison Lockwood

What Are Movie Download Services? Movie download services are exactly what they sound like: a

service that allows you to download movies from the Internet onto your hard drive or a DVD. Though this isn't a new concept, it is relatively new to the legal world of consumerism. Though 'pirates' have been making free download of movies available for quite some time, movie studios are now getting in on the action and offering access to their movies for download the day they hit the stores in DVD format - for a fee, of course.

Who's Who In Movie Download Services? In the relatively new world of legitimate movie download services, there are surprisingly many players, but only a few of them are major. There's Movielink and Sony's CinemaNow which offer old and new movies for purchase or 24 hour rental. Rental fees are comparable to the local video store but purchase is more expensive than if you were to buy the DVD. ClickStar, backed by Danny DeVito among other big names in Hollywood, is another up and comer in the world of movie download services, but this one's draw is that it will offer movies for download while they are still showing in the theater. It will also feature a streaming channel devoted to documentaries.

AT&T is teaming up with Vongo, another movie downloading site, to offer its DSL service in concert and duo promotions. Different from Movielink and CinemaNow, Vongo is a subscription service offered for a monthly fee which allows its members unlimited access to movies, videos, and a streaming Starz channel. Pay per view movies are available as well for an additional fee.

Movie Download Services: The Nitty Gritty

– Price - Ranging anywhere from \$10–\$20, the irony is downloading movies legally isn't cheap. In order to appease the retailers who make big bucks on DVDs released in stores, the online downloading services are keeping their fees in the clouds. Which of course, doesn't hurt their pocketbook, either.

– Availability - It depends. Different services have different deals with different movie studios. As for old movies, those are being added all the time. But the nice thing is, if they have it, you can get it - instantly.

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- Space - You will need between 1200 and 2000 MBs of free space to store your movie. Depending on your system, this may be a lot or a little. Some services may allow you to burn your download to a DVD, but only if you're buying the movie and even then, most won't.
- Download Time - This is no time for dial-up, that's for sure. Anything DSL and faster should get you your movie in under an hour with an average of 35 to 40 minutes, and that's if you want it fast and grainy. If you're willing to wait a little longer, say, up to two hours, you can download a higher quality version. A nice feature that some services offer is the ability to start watching the movie while it's still downloading.
- Technical Requirements - At least Windows Media Player 10, fast Internet connection, Internet Explorer 6.0, Windows XP. You might be able to get away with older versions, but it isn't recommended. And yes, did you note - it's all PC and no Mac. That's right. PC users only, please.
- Computer Viewing Only - Currently, that's the state of things. That is, unless you choose a service that allows you to download it to some other electronic handheld device of your choosing, like PSP or iPod. Of course, you could always use an S-video jack to hook your computer to your TV and watch it on the big screen. Some services allow limited DVD burning, but they may restrict the DVD to playing only in the computer to which the movie was downloaded, allowing your fancy DVD player to gather dust.
- Buy Versus Rent - It's a strange situation at this point, but different studios offer different services different licenses to different movies. So, you may only be able to rent a title through one service that another is offering for sale. Other services may not have any access to certain titles while others do. There's no standard just yet, so it's a bit of a crap shoot.

What's the Benefit of Movie Download Services? Convenience! Forget long lines at the theater, the video store being out of a new release, or waiting in virtual queue to get your mailed DVD through a subscription service. No more concern about court cases and legal fees for downloading movies illegally or spyware from file sharing applications that will slow down your computer if not cripple it beyond repair. Then, of course, there's the fact that you can watch the newest movies as many times as you like on your personal computer and instantly upon purchase - no waiting and no driving to the store.

What's the Downside of Movie Download Services? At the moment, cost and restricted viewing access. You may not necessarily want to watch a movie on your computer when you just invested \$2000 in a big screen HDTV. And you may not want to invest \$20 in a movie that you can't even resell online if you don't like it. If you have a slow internet connection, the download time may be a bummer, too, especially if you're trying to use your computer for other things while the process slows your computer to a painful snail pace. And if you use a Mac, well, obviously, the downside is that movie download services simply don't exist. Then, what if a virus infects the computer where all your movies are stored? Yup. Have to buy them all over again.

Movie Download Services - Yay or Nay? The state of affairs being what they are – that is, in their ugly braces and zits prepubescent stage – probably nay. Remember the first BETA machines? Or the \$700

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CD players back in the '80s? When movie download service lowers their prices and speed up the technology, allow for actual DVD burnings that include the extras and TV viewings as well as access to films that are still in theaters, then yay! In the meantime, sticking with higher quality DVDs that don't discriminate against Mac users and big screen television sets and allow for resale later on. Unless you have to see the movie This Very Second, movie download services are not yet the incredible service they have the potential to be in the future.

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The Latest Media Trend – Movie Downloads

By Chuck Dunlevy

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Movie Download websites are becoming more and more popular for anyone who enjoys watching movies.

Think about this. You go to your local media store and pay \$19.95 for a movie. If you really want to expand your movie collection, this can get expensive. Why not sign up for a membership to a movie download site and pay the same price to get unlimited movie downloads directly onto your computer. The software pays for itself after one download. Buy one movie, get life time movies for free. You surely can't get this deal at your local video rental store.

As you can see, the digital download trend is now the way to go to get all your favorite movies. Simply become a member of the site that suits you and immediately have access to unlimited movie downloads all for a one time fee.

Chuck Dunlevy is the webmaster of <http://www.entertainment-headquarters.com/movies.html>. He has developed a keen interest in the latest media related products and has built a website geared toward bringing consumers the best products that are currently available on the internet. Visit <http://www.entertainment-headquarters.com/movies.html> for more information.



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