



Do It Yourself Media Distribution Field Guide

www.creativealliance.org/camm/distro_guide.pdf

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

If you are making a film, video, dvd or some other piece of media that you want to reach an audience that exceeds you, your family and your circle of friends and acquaintances, then you need to think about distribution. This document will provide introductory information on how to think about distribution, different distribution models and how they work, as well as some specific information on basic items needed to reach certain audiences and to be picked up by a distributor.

Distribution is often something that media makers consider after their project is complete. While this document will help provide guidance on different distribution options for completed media, one goal here is to strongly encourage media makers to start thinking about their distribution ideas, plans, and desires during the initial planning stages. To do so, you will need to determine who your intended audience(s) is, how to prioritize viewership vs. revenue, and what basic items you will need for a successful promotion plan. Even if your project gets picked up by a distributor, the degree of success—measured either by viewership or revenue—will depend on how you promote your film, video, etc.

There will be no one universal answer for how to best get your media out to your target audience(s). A multi-pronged approach—one that integrates self-distribution activities in conjunction with the activities of your distributor (should you get pick up by and/or chose to use one) –will be more successful. Distribution is changing. There are hybrid models, collectives, emerging video digital technologies including internet-based distribution.

Like grassroots organizing, so much of independent media success depends on building strong personal relationships. If you are specifically interested in public schools systems, you need to know the curricula and make sure your film integrates it. Bringing teachers on board early will help navigate and explain this process as well as create ambassadors within the school system for your project. Plus, they can help develop teaching guides for your project, something that accompanies almost every piece of educational media. If you are interested in having your work in public libraries, the collections librarian is key.

Finally, there are some “nuts and bolts” items that need to be attended to before any media project can be successfully distributed. If you want to be purchased by an institution (school, library, university) or sold at retail outlets, or listed in searchable databases, or in libraries, or be in a distributor’s catalogue, you will need to get an ISBN, or in the case of DVDs, a UPC. If you’ve used any music that you don’t own, you’ll need to get permission. If you self-distribute, you’ll have to decide how your media will be shipped and who will do it.

Finally, a sample table of distributors—ranging from experimental avante garde to kid-powered educational films to online distribution of films with social or political interests—is provided. New distributors emerge constantly. This list should simply serve as a jumping off point. Consider integrating as many different distribution avenues as possible into your promotions plan. Most importantly, be hands on. No one will promote your media better than you. No one.

QUESTIONS FOR MEDIA MAKERS CONSIDERING DISTRIBUTION

For this discussion, *distribution* means the promotion and dissemination of media to an intended audience and *general distribution plans* refer to overall methods, mechanisms and strategies that you will utilize. This discussion does not address detailed distribution plans geared toward a specific piece of media. In addition, it is important to note that any distribution plan developed will rely heavily upon the media maker for promotional activities. This can not be stressed enough. Even if you are fortunate and get picked up by a distributor, they will have an entire catalogue to promote. No one will put the energy or focus into promoting your media that you (or someone you've hired to act on your behalf) will. Considering the following questions will help you decide about how to approach distribution and marketing strategies, both overall and specifically for each piece of media you create.

➤ WHO IS YOUR INTENDED AUDIENCE?

If you, the media maker, are making the media for yourself, then the questions stop here. If, however, you want to distribute your media, on some level you'll need to make the film for your audience(s). If you don't know who your specific audience(s) is yet, then this is a good time to start thinking about them. For example, if the intended audience is 7th and 8th graders in Baltimore City Public Schools, then the media maker needs to address issues of curriculum, content standards, length, and production values. Here are some questions to consider:

- ✓ What are the defining characteristics of your audience i.e., environmentalists, educators, audiences interested in experimental works, policymakers etc?
- ✓ Is your primary goal to make media that can/will be used by Baltimore area schools systems?
- ✓ Is your primary goal to get media into circulation at area libraries?
- ✓ Is your primary goal to market media to local retail-based audiences?
- ✓ Is your distribution goal local, regional and/or national?

➤ VIEWERS OR REVENUE?

First, it is important to keep in mind the difference between revenue and profit. While it is always possible to realize revenue from media sales/rentals/screenings, it is much more difficult to make a profit. For example, if you make a video that the Baltimore City Public School System approves of and then decides to purchase one for each high school at \$10 each, the revenue will come to around \$350-\$400—probably not enough to realize a profit.

Understandably, realizing a revenue stream is important. However, there are a number of web-based and digital options that will provide access to a national, even international audience, but that will not—at least in the immediate future—provide a revenue stream. For example, www.getdemocracy.com, www.youtube.com, www.ifilm.com. In addition, distributors keep anywhere between 50% and 80% of gross revenue for the media in their catalogues. Regardless, neither free online distribution nor traditional distribution should be ignored as they help to develop a wider audience and hopefully a demand.

- ✓ Is your media in a format that can be transmitted via the internet or digital delivery?
- ✓ Have you prepared trailers for use on free internet video sites?
- ✓ Have you determined how much revenue you'll need to realize?
- ✓ What revenue split are you willing to share with distributors in exchange for any promotional, fulfillment and other services they provide?

➤ DO YOU HAVE A PROMOTION PLAN?

Both national and local media entities and media makers (for example Wendy Cohen at Arts Engine and Charles Cohen of the Memorial Stadium video *The Last Season*) emphasize the importance of the media maker's role in promotion. The promotion strategy for any piece of media should be developed *in the beginning*, along side the development of your production schedule. The following are some general questions that are applicable to the development of a promotion plan for any piece of media.

✓ *How will you allocate time for promotion?*

You will need to do an assessment of how you allocate your time (% to administration, % to promotion, % to media making, % to other) and determine if you are allocating enough time to promotion activities.

✓ *How will you get word out to your intended viewing audience?*

The ways you will do this will differ depending on the content and intended audience. For example, if you are making an advocacy piece on needle exchange programs that is intended to effect public policy, you may consider asking a handful of representatives from local drug addiction/rehabilitation programs to serve on a media advisory committee. Soliciting their input and participation from the beginning will help to create a “built-in” viewing community who will help promote the media upon completion. They will feel a sense of ownership in the film and will be vested in promoting it.

Or, if you are making an experimental anime about toy poodles, try connecting with a film animation class at UMBC or the Baltimore Toy Poodle Association *before* you make your film!

✓ *What are the likely sales/rental outlets for your media?*

Do an objective assessment of the intended content, production value, and length of your media and develop a list of likely local sales outlets, distributors, film festivals, vod/internet sites, etc. As you are working on the media, begin to think about appropriate packaging, press packets, contacts, sound bites for sales calls. When the media is finished, your promotion strategy and packet should be in its final stages as well.

➤ DISTRIBUTORS

Consider the information in this section as a distribution primer. Much of the following information that follows comes from the Youth Media Distribution Initiative (www.ymdi.org), which is a project of Mediarights.org and Arts Engine, Inc. This information pertains to traditional means of distribution and is included to ensure a shared basic understanding.

✓ *Who are Distributors*

Distributors acquire the rights to media from the people who own them with the aim of selling enough copies of the work to make money for themselves and the producers. Once they've made a deal with the producers, the distributors market the works in different ways: through catalogues (in print and on-line) and brochures they mail to potential buyers at colleges and universities, high schools, libraries, television stations, and movie theatres in the United States and abroad. They often enter the works in film and video festivals and develop publicity campaigns to get reporters' and film critics' attention. Through these marketing techniques, the distributors hope to find teachers, TV and cable programmers, and movie theatre owners to buy (or rent) the films and videos they represent and to get them seen by the widest possible audience.

Most distributors tend to specialize in certain types of films and videos. Some companies are only interested in educational films; others want feature-length dramas they can sell to movie theatres; still others focus on hour-long works that will interest programmers at TV stations in foreign countries. For example, Women Make Movies in New York City will only distribute films made by women (of all ages); Fanlight Productions, in Boston, specializes in documentaries and educational films on topics like healthcare, aging, family and gender issues; Frameline, in San Francisco, promotes films on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender issues. Some distributors, like California NewsReel, change focus from year to year.

✓ *Types of Distributors*

Educational - Films of varying lengths and subject-matter targeted to teachers and students at middle schools, high schools, universities and colleges.

Broadcast - Films suitable for programming on television or cable that fit within the time slots (usually a half-hour or an hour) of the station.

Home Video - Films sold directly to consumers through video stores and catalogues.

International - Films sold to television stations and theatres in countries outside the U.S.

Theatrical - Feature-length films for exhibition in theatres or large public exhibition halls.

✓ *Things to consider*

Here are some things to think about when considering if you want to go the distributor route:

Running time: Running time definitely makes a difference to distributors and buyers. A 5-minute masterpiece won't do for a company that only distributes feature-length movies (roughly 90 minutes to two hours) or that sells to TV or cable stations with half-hour or hour time slots. If your movie is a short (5 to 20 minutes) you'll need to find a distributor who specializes in short works that are easier to market to festivals for programming in between feature films. On the other hand, if your film is too long, you may be asked to cut it so it fits into a specific time slot.

Check out distribution catalogues for typical running times of films that are similar to yours. Some distributors specialize in compilations of short films, so they may be looking for your 5-minute masterpiece!

Copyright issues: *To sign an agreement with a distributor, you must be the rightful owner of everything in the film.* That means there's nothing in your film owned by someone else—a song, a piece of writing, a clip from another film or television show—that you don't have permission to use. For example, if you scored your work with a song by Ammonium, had a character recite a long passage from Lord of the Rings, cut in a few seconds of Terminator III, or even zoomed in on a famous photograph of Dr. Martin Luther King, you'll need to get legal permission to include those elements in your film before it can be distributed.

Take stock of what's in your film. Make a list of all the elements you do not have permission to use: a song or piece of music taken from a CD; a clip from someone else's video, film or TV show; a shot of a photograph taken by someone else; a poem or piece of writing taken from a published work like a book, magazine, or newspaper; piece of writing taken from the Internet.

Timing: It's probably better to wait until you've given your film a little exposure before you approach a distributor. You need time to prepare good promotional materials (a flyer, a synopsis, even a press kit) to send in about the film. It will help catch a distributor's eye if the film has already had a public showing at a small festival or special event and possibly attracted coverage from the local newspapers. The more press notices, however small, that you can send to the distributor about the film, the more likely the company is to take an interest in your work.

✓ *How to Find a Distributor*

Just as you have an audience in mind when you make your film, distributors usually choose films they believe will appeal to certain people such as young men and women, policy makers, or environmental activists. If you have a clear idea which audience would be most interested in seeing your film, you'll have an easier job finding the appropriate distributor.

Search the web for companies that distribute films on similar topics as yours. The distributor list included in this document is a good place to start. Chances are if you've made a tape about a neighborhood basketball team, you'll find a distributor whose catalogue lists lots of films on local sports. Also, whenever you see a film you like, jot down the name of the distributor.

When you've found what you think is the right distributor for your film, check the company catalogue or Web site for instructions on how to submit your work. Even if the distributor turns down the film you've just made, keep the discussion positive and find out what kinds of films the company is looking for. Try to build a relationship with the distributor for future projects. Make sure you ask for names of others distributors who might be interested in your current film.

✓ *Distributor contracts*

For doing their job, distributors contract with the owner/producer of the film or video to take a certain percentage of the income from its sale or rental, if there is any. *That percentage can range from 25% to 75%.*

When you make a deal with a distributor, you will be asked to sign a contract that lays out the details of your agreement, from the percentage you'll be paid if the film makes money to the types of expenses the distributor can deduct from your royalty statement to the dates you can expect to get a check.

Here are some things to think about when you're signing a distribution agreement:

Territory: Some distributors agree to sell your film only in certain parts of the world, most likely North America if the company is based in the U.S.

Exclusivity/Non-Exclusivity: Most distributors want to be the one and only (exclusive) representative of your film in their territory. That means if you sign on with a Chicago-based distributor to cover North America, you can't make the same deal with another distribution company in Albuquerque. In some cases, however, distributors may be willing to get non-exclusive rights, which means they agree to share the marketing of your film with another company.

Length of Agreement: Distributors usually ask the filmmaker or producer to sign on for a certain length of time, typically five years. Most contracts also give the distributors the right to renew the deal when time is up.

Hidden Costs: To make money on a film, distributors have to spend some money—for the cost of postage, tapes, brochures, catalogues and other promotional tools. Some contracts specify that you and the distributor will split these costs. Or, the distributor may agree to pick up all the costs of marketing and promotion. Royalty statements spell out what costs have been deducted from your share of the income, and should be double-checked with the contract.

➤ SELF-DISTRIBUTION

There are several reasons why self-distribution might be a great option for you:

- ✓ If you can't find any distributor who wants to include your movie in their catalogue.
- ✓ If you don't want most of the profit that comes from the sale of your movie to go to a distributor instead of to you.
- ✓ If you already have contacts and relationships with potential markets through your partnerships and outreach work.
- ✓ If you want to have complete control over where your movie is shown.
- ✓ If you want to distribute your movie for free (or just for the cost of shipping).

Self-distribution is the answer to all of these concerns, but it does take time, effort and money. If you are interested in getting your movie theatrically distributed i.e. shown in movie theatres, you need to work with a distributor – they are the ones who have agreements with movie theatres around the country and around the world. But more likely than not, you are interested in getting your film shown on TV and/or making it available for purchase for home video or educational purposes.

If you are planning to self-distribute your film in a serious way, *promotion and marketing are key*. Whenever you mention your film in any promotional materials, you should include information regarding purchasing.

✓ *Self-distributing online*

If you are interested in the home video and educational markets, you can successfully distribute your movie through your **Web site**. You will have to decide how much you want to charge and this should be based on average **prices** for similar movies (do some research and find out what people are charging) and how much you think people will be willing to pay. It is also very common to have two or three prices – **home video, educational rate and nonprofit rate**. Generally, the educational rate is the highest (up to \$300) because it is intended for universities, libraries and schools, nonprofit rate is a bit cheaper (up to \$200) and the home video rate is the cheapest (up to \$50).

You also need to decide if you are going to have an online order form by using a service like **PayPal**, or if you want people to send you an e-mail with their ordering information. It is unsafe for people to give you their credit card information via e-mail, so unless you are using a secure order form through PayPal or another service, you'll either have to get credit card information by phone or fax, or have people pay by check.

If you are making money from selling your movie, you will need to pay the appropriate taxes. You should consult with an accountant and make sure that you save a percentage of your profits for the IRS.

If you are selling your movie online (VHS or DVD copies), you need to come up with a plan for **fulfillment**—the process of making copies of your movie, taking orders and mailing out copies to customers. If yours is a small-scale operation (0-20 orders a month) then you can probably handle this on your own (or with the help of some volunteers or a partnering organization).

If you are getting more than 20 orders a month, you should consider using a **video fulfillment house**. A fulfillment house makes copies of your movie and stores them, takes phone and online orders, and mails out your film. If you use one of these companies, they'll send you a monthly

check and a statement that tells you how many orders were made. Like a distributor, a fulfillment house takes a cut of the profit. Unlike a distributor, they do not do any marketing, promotion or outreach for your film.

✓ *Selling Copies in Person*

Another way to self-distribute your film is by selling copies face-to-face at various events. This strategy involves researching the various events at which your media would reach an interested audience. If you organize an outdoor screening, you can set up a table where you sell copies of your movie on VHS or DVD.

A BALTIMORE SELF DISTRIBUTION SUCCESS STORY
THE LAST SEASON: THE LIFE AND DEMOLITION OF MEMORIAL STADIUM

Charles Cohen and Joseph Mathew directed *The Last Season: The Life and Demolition of Memorial Stadium* (2002). They also self-distributed the film. In an interview with Cohen, he reported that all the distribution legwork for *The Last Season* was done by the filmmakers. This included festival submissions for the initial film release as well as the manufacture and distribution of the video version. They manufacture the video as needed and it remains available for purchase on their website.

The local distribution of this film was a standout success, part of which can be traced to the subject matter and nostalgia for Memorial Stadium, part of which is due to building on relationships with people in key places, and part of which is due to the filmmakers' incessant marketing legwork.

One of the key elements of their promotion campaign was building upon existing relationships with MissionMedia employees. MissionMedia built and maintains the film's website, which is comprehensive, well-designed, kept current, and very easy to use.

When seeking local retail outlets for video sales, they built upon a relationship with a colleague who was working for one of the major chains. This led to them getting placed in local Sam Goody and Circuit City stores. This, of course, led to much bigger sales, but they still needed to do the legwork with all the other local merchants: gift shops, museum stores, etc. They found they had to be thorough in thinking about what possible outlets could sell their video, and found that because of the subject matter, the number of potential outlets were significantly expanded. Even so, they still had to handle all aspects of this marketing and promotion.

It's pretty clear that the film found its video audience due to nostalgia for Memorial Stadium, since the video functions well as a souvenir. They still sell approximately ten or more copies per month through their website, which is impressive because it's not currently being heavily marketed.

➤ DISTRIBUTION HYBRIDS, ALTERNATIVES AND EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

Thanks to the internet, digital technology, streaming and video on demand (VOD, "distribution" has taken on a different flavor, becoming more diffused and democratic. Above, traditional distribution is discussed as well as successful self-distribution techniques. Below, you will find examples of distribution hybrids (distributors with a different model, i.e., non-profit, cooperative, etc), local/mid-level distributors, and emerging technologies with possible distribution applications.

✓ *Distribution Hybrid Examples*

New Day Films

New Day is a collective of more than [50 filmmakers](#) from across the United States representing over 100 films, a true cooperative and democratically run organization dedicated to bringing high quality social issue media to audiences. They also have a strong commitment to promoting diversity within the membership of New Day and within the content of the media they distribute. The focus is on the education market with titles for non-theatrical distribution and the media stock appears to have pretty high production value. To be a member, one would be dedicated to the cooperative as well as to their film. For information on how to become a filmmaker member, go to <http://www.newday.com/about/recruitment.html>.

Free Speech TV

Free Speech TV is a publicly-supported, independent, non-profit TV channel that is a project of Public Communicators, Inc., a 501(c)3 non-profit, tax-exempt organization. It is available nationally, 24/7, on DISH Satellite Network. Selected programs are available on 156 community access cable stations in 33 states.

Free Speech TV broadcasts independently-produced documentaries dealing with social, political, cultural, and environmental issues; commissions and produces original programming; develops programming partnerships and collaborations with social justice organizations; provides special live broadcasts from remote locations; and maintains an adjunct Web site that hosts one of the Internet's largest collections of progressive audio and video content. For information on how to submit, go to <http://www.freespeech.org/html/howtosubmit.shtml>.

Video Data Bank

Video Data Bank (VDB) is the leading resource for videos by and about video artists. There are over 1500 titles divided among 3 collections: Early Video Art contains 209 titles produced between 1968 and 1980, Independent Video and Alternative Media made up of 600 works made from 1980 to the present, and 308 taped interviews On Art and Artists. VDB collects, promotes, distributes, exhibits and preserves the work of video artists. They do not deal with film. There are currently no youth-produced videos in the collection, mainly because included artists are usually at a fairly well-established point in their careers.

Canyon Cinema

One of the world's leading distributors of experimental and independent film, Canyon is an artist-run organization dedicated to the support, promotion, distribution and preservation of motion picture film as an art form. Unrivaled collection of more than 3500 films traces the history of the experimental and avant-garde filmmaking movement from the 1930s to the present. Canyon's primary activity is the distribution of 16mm films and videotapes by independent film artists. Independent filmmakers, unlike commercial filmmakers or studio artists, rarely receive financial compensation for their work. The money that Canyon Cinema returns to the artists helps them continue making their films. They state that they are the only distribution organization that has been consistent in the equitable return of artists' revenues; more than 40% of Canyon's gross income is returned directly to the filmmakers. See www.canyoncinema.com for more information

The Film Maker's Cooperative

The Film-Makers' Cooperative is the largest archive and distributor of independent and avant-garde films in the world. Created by artists in 1962, the Coop has more than 5,000 films and videotapes in its collection.

The Film Makers' Cooperative is a non-exclusive distribution organization that does not select work, or look for any particular style, genre or budget. To join the Coop as a filmmaker/ videomaker all you need is a film or video. The membership fee is \$40 annually. You must also deposit your work at the Coop for it to be listed for distribution. The Coop is completely non-exclusive (you still own your work, you can still show your work, you can make use of other distribution as long as it is also non-exclusive or doesn't mind that your work is also in the Coop). You set the rental price (the minimum for any rental being \$20). You receive 60% of your rentals, while 40% goes to the Coop for overhead. Rental info (minimum fee \$20, order 6-8 weeks in advance, which can be prohibitive to certain audiences). For more information, go to www.film-makerscoop.com.

Netflix

Netflix is the largest online DVD rental service offering flat-rate rental-by-mail in the U.S. It has amassed a collection of 70,000 titles and has about six million subscribers. Netflix has recently begun playing a prominent role in independent film distribution. Through a new division called Red Envelope Entertainment, Netflix licenses and distributes independent films such as *Born into Brothels*. As of late 2006, Red Envelope Entertainment has also expanded into producing original content with filmmakers such as John Waters.

✓ *Local/Mid-Level Distributors*

Anyone with the proper resources can become a media publisher and obtain a block of ISBNs, just as anyone with the proper resources can obtain a web presence. If choosing to self-distribute, to properly exploit the internet at a minimum a domain, sufficient server space and bandwidth is needed. Distributing over the internet runs into two main technological problems:

server space and bandwidth use. These are both concerns because video files are huge, especially if they are high-quality. Server space refers to the amount of disc memory your file takes up -- this potentially limits the number of videos that can be available. Bandwidth is basically how much data can be transferred in a given period. For most web hosting companies, rent a certain amount of bandwidth is rented per month and when that upper limit is reached, the website tends shut down, either until the next month or until it is reset. Of course, it's disastrous to not have your site accessible, because people lose patience and interest. If they don't get your file the first time, and in a relatively timely manner, they are not likely to come back again.

In this regard, it is important to select a web host that will be stable, and this tends to mean purchasing services from an established entity. Following are some local internet mid-level resources -- there may be more, but these all have large local profiles. Many of these entities, like Black Out Studios and Mission Media, have built significant reputations and obviously support projects for which they have some sort of affinity. This affinity led to the partnership connection that helped *The Last Season* with its branding, marketing and internet sales since Mission Media hosts and maintains that website for the filmmakers.

Black Out Studios

<http://www.blackoutstudios.com/>

This profile is currently is mostly music-based, and is clearly built on an affinity network of Baltimore projects. They may have plans or be interested in video distribution. They don't appear to be advertising a web hosting service.

Mission Media

<http://www.missionmedia.net>

They provide web hosting, development and maintenance. They also run a lot of local event ticketing (through missiontix.com), and have done a great deal of work to help support artistic and cultural work in Baltimore.

The Berndt Group

<http://www.berndtgroup.com>

This is a local web developer which has done a great deal of work to help support artistic and cultural work in Baltimore.

Fells Point Designs

<http://www.fellspointdesign.com/>

This is a local web host and developer that has done a great deal of work to help support artistic and cultural work in Baltimore.

✓ *Marginalized, Grassroots, Alternative and Independent VOD Organizations*

There is no direct CD Baby analog for DVD distribution. It is just as easy for hard copy video (DVD, videotape, etc) to be distributed through musical media distributors like CD Baby as through the outlets that are also selling books. Amazon is the most obvious example, but even independent booksellers like Powell's Books is a great place to consider when looking for outlets. Most of these outlets are accessible to someone who already has published works, regardless of medium, especially those which already have an ISBN (covered in later section). In short, it's become a lot easier for an "alternative" or "grass roots" media maker make her work available to the general public. What remains difficult is getting the general public or your target audience interested, and this is where marketing comes in.

Some of the marketing is clearly going to have to be dealt with by the artist, but often outlets utilize their internal marketing strategies can help generate interest. For example, a local artist's short film was requested by a representative of IFILM.com, and after it was uploaded, the new IFILM.com acquaintance used their in-house promotional outlets (email, posting the video to the front page, and viral marketing) to make the film a top-ten hit.

It should be noted that the most popular streamed video content are short works. Longer works, especially feature-length films, will be discussed after this section. The sources below mostly focus on shorts, but longer pieces (half an hour or more) are also sometimes available. These sites are, for the most part, free to the user and so most have an advertising revenue stream. Some will definitely move towards sale of VOD products in the future (if they are not already doing so), but it seems that they are mostly going to wait for the dust to settle.

The following are examples of web-based in browser viewing. This is a fast-growing and vibrant technology sector, so these examples are likely to change and multiple quickly.

IFILM.com

In-browser viewing includes user uploads and "curated" video/film. Much of the popular content consists of major studio film trailers, comedy shorts and soft-core shorts. However, they are definitely interested in artistic and challenging content -- some significant shorts which are currently available on IFILM include a fifteen minute short about the role of African-American women in World War 2 and a controversial film about the treatment of women in a fundamentalist Muslim family, which lead to the filmmaker's death.

YouTube.com

In-browser viewing, consisting largely of user uploads. Much of the popular content consists of major studio film trailers, comedy shorts and soft-core shorts. They are a much more populist site than IFILM, and they are likely to bear the brunt of future court decisions about what is permissible for users to upload and stream.

Nomadsland.com

www.nomadsland.com

A new site that offers viewers a destination to watch quality independent films, documentaries, short films, satire, animation and music videos with a political or social message. Some are free and others are available as secure downloads to rent or to own. To the filmmaker, this site is a destination where he or she can earn royalties from their films and reach a world-wide audience to fund their craft and career. This site is new and is currently testing its model. No special player is necessary for viewing.

Free Speech TV

<http://www.freespeech.org/>

Most VOD content is viewable within a RealPlayer browser, and this outlet is also available on satellite TV systems. This is a stellar example of a movement within satellite TV distribution to combine efforts with web and VOD technologies to meet a political goal.

Others

Networking sites like Friendster and MySpace are popular for video distribution, and they have proven themselves very useful as marketing tools for the arts. These days, it's almost a mistake for anyone trying to make it in the arts to not have a MySpace page.

The following are examples of web-based proprietary players, meaning you install a separate player on your computer for full functionality. Again, due to the very vibrant growth and expansion of this sector, fast-paced change occurs and these examples are very time-specific.

VEOH.com

Touted as the "new YouTube," this proprietary player allows you download video in original formats (such as mpg, avi, etc.) There is clearly a tendency towards the commercial and the adolescent here, as with many of these media outlets.

Google Video

<http://video.google.com/>

Users are capable of viewing video within the web browser with proprietary player install. After install, users can download copies of some videos, and these downloaded videos are saved in a proprietary format (video is only viewable through the Google software).

GetDemocracy.com

Fully-functional Internet Television for marginalized and political videos. Software includes

a viewer for streamed and downloaded programming, along with a browser to find additional programming. Commercial analogs of this system include Tivo and Itunes -- the browser can "subscribe" you to a particular show or channel and let you know when new media in that channel is available for viewing.

ITunes.com (Podcasting)

Mainstream Multi-media portal. The proprietary player plays music as well as video content. While the mainstream clearly dominates this media portal, it is completely possible for a self-published artist to have her/his media made available on ITunes. The marketing to get noticed is the hardest part. Typically speaking, "podcasting" refers mainly to audio programming, but as the rise of VOD-casting (see below) comes, this terminology may change somewhat.

Others

All of the mainstream multimedia players (WinAmp, RealPlayer, MusicMatch, Windows Media Player) have the capability of receiving streamed media, including video. There are proprietary channels within each of these players, and most of them also have the availability of finding and playing streamed content from anywhere on the internet. So they not only serve as players, but as potential distribution channels.

Feature-length VOD sources are a developing (and therefore unstable) market. That said, many of the major players in internet media and movies are vying for a place: Amazon.com, Google, IMDb.com, Netflix, and even the Denver Public Library. Everything from classic films to current tv shows are already available for both rental and purchase through many of these outlets. Some examples of alternate/underground VOD (in addition to those mentioned above)

GreenCine (Online Video Rental/Purchase Store)

<http://www.greencine.com/main>

GreenCine is the #1 online shop and source for film addicts. Boasting one of the largest libraries of independent, international and documentary films in the world, GreenCine offers more than 80,000 titles in over 250 genres for download, rent or sale. With a diverse and ever-expanding community of members, GreenCine is the #1 destination for film discovery, debate and information.

GreenCine's mission has three interweaving parts: 1) to form and foster a comprehensive online film community where members can connect with each other and discuss and recommend their favorite films, 2) to broaden the viewing tastes of audiences and give a spotlight to films and filmmakers rarely featured on other movie sites, and 3) to build and maintain one of the largest and most diverse libraries of films on the Internet.

Shiny Object Digital Video

<http://www.shiny-object.com/>

Shiny Object is now actively seeking the best in truly independent film for distribution to the VOD market, within the US and around the world.

Havoc TV

<http://www.havoctv.com>

Havoc Television is a national VOD television network dedicated to independent and underground music, action sports and related lifestyle content. Our mission at havoc Television is simple: to bring the most exciting and essential elements of independent music and underground culture to television. With an unwavering focus on the vanguards of independent music and action sports, havoc unleashes the programming that can't be found on MTV or other television channels.

Netflix

On January 16, 2007 Netflix began rolling out its new "Watch Now" feature to a limited number of customers, with the feature available to all subscribers within six months. The Watch Now feature allows subscribers, at no additional cost, to stream near-DVD quality movies and TV Shows instantly. Subscribers will get 1 hour of media for approximately every dollar they spend on their subscription. Currently the service has approximately 1,000 movies and TV Shows available with over 5,000 expected to be available later in the year.

DISTRIBUTION AND PROMOTION SUGGESTIONS

- ✓ Submit to targeted distributors. Identify distributors who carry your type/genre of media and submit to them. If your media is picked up, ask for a non-exclusive contract. This allows you to retain the rights to distribute in your local markets, to try for broadcast, to seek theatrical release opportunities and to take advantage of other screening opportunities.
- ✓ If you have used music to which you do not own the rights, resolve the copyright issues. No distributor will pick up your media otherwise.
- ✓ If you choose to self-distribute and you want to be included in a system (schools, libraries, retail outlet), you'll need to obtain ISBN.
- ✓ Increase viewership/interest by taking advantage of no/low cost emerging technologies. If you aren't taking advantage of various internet avenues you are missing out on chances to build an audience base for your media. Most access is free/low cost, is national, and is where many target audiences are getting info on emerging media.

DISTRIBUTION AND PROMOTION SUGGESTIONS, CONT'D

- ✓ Consider building a strategic partnership with a local quasi/mid-level distributor or an educational institution.
- ✓ Develop distribution/promotions line item in your budget. If you don't already have one, you should create a distribution line item into your budget. Again, this will help you to institutionalize the process of distribution and well as signify that it is a priority.
- ✓ Build/build on individual relationships within the you target systems, communities and audiences. For example, if you are making educational media that you want to be used in a/any school system, make personal individual connections with teacher and librarians. If done successfully, you will have created a network of "media advocates" who can then act as your voice in the respective systems, helping to promote the purchase and use of your media to other teachers, librarians, professors and administrators.
- ✓ Develop a marketing and promotions checklist that you put into action during the first phases of any new media project. The process of developing the checklist will help identify the items you feel will be necessary for any promotion and marketing plan as well as those specific to the media. In addition, it will help institutionalize the process of thinking about distribution at the beginning of your media project.

SPECIFIC TARGET AUDIENCES

➤ SCHOOL SYSTEMS

For each new media project, you'll need to decide if you are interested in selling it/making it available to schools. If you choose to prioritize making media that gets used in schools, you'll need to know the curriculum and tailor it to work within that framework. The research for this section focused on the Baltimore City Public School System but the essential information is widely applicable to most other systems.

- ✓ *Advisory Boards*

Assemble an Advisory Board/Group comprised of teachers, librarians and administrators who are interested in the arts and media. They can help you understand the curriculum and content standards that will need to address in order for school funds to be spent on your media. They'll also be able to advise on what screening event activities will draw in teacher attendees. They will be able to assist with the development of teaching/viewing guides for each piece of media. Lastly, they will become invested in the success of your media project and will act as "ambassadors" in their respective schools and with their colleagues.

✓ *Cost*

Keep your media in the \$10-\$15 price range. This is the price range that was deemed reasonable by teachers interviewed for this project, especially if the work is in the 8-15 minute range.

✓ *Develop teaching guides*

See Nuts and Bolts section for further discussion.

✓ *Tie the media to curriculum.*

In Maryland, the universal curriculum standards are contained within the Voluntary State Curriculum. If you want the school system to approve its use and, better yet, to pay for it, the media must be explicitly tied to the VSC. The VSC is complex and nuanced. Having teachers advising your project will provide great assistance with this as well as developing teaching guides. See Nuts and Bolts section for more discussion.

✓ *Host screening events.*

Tailor the hours and the content of the events to the needs of teachers. Give them something to put into their hands—sample teaching guides, pamphlets, calendars, pens. Have the filmmakers attend and talk not only about the content of the media but what they learned while making it.

➤ LIBRARY SYSTEMS

For each new media project, you'll need to decide if you are interested in targeting libraries. The research for this section focused on the Enoch Pratt Library System.

✓ *Get your media into the collection.*

First, you'll need an ISBN. Then you can send an unsolicited letter to the Collections Manager. However, you'll increase the odds of success if you build a relationship with a target librarian who handles the category that your media falls within.

Nancy Haskins
Collections Manager
Enoch Pratt Free Library
400 Cathedral
Baltimore MD 21201

✓ *Keep your media in the collection.*

Given hard copy space constraints, items that don't circulate eventually get removed from the active collection. If you prioritize getting a piece of media into the collection, you should develop a promotion campaign to let your target audience(s) know that it is at the library and available for check out.

NUTS AND BOLTS

➤ ISBNs AND UPCs

If you plan to sell/distribute to libraries, retail establishments, education systems, etc then you will need some type of uniform code signifier for your product. Basically, every item sold needs a unique number. In the book world, which also includes videos, that is the ISBN (International Standard Book Number). For other media, including DVDs, it is a UPC (Uniform Product Code). Below is information on these different systems and how to obtain the uniform numbers they provide. If you are solely self-distributing, then you will need to obtain this number and generate the bar codes. However, if you are working with some type of distributor, they may provide this service for you.

✓ *What is an ISBN?*

The International Standard Book Number (ISBN) is a unique 10 or 13 digit number that identifies one title or edition of a title from one specific publisher and is unique to that edition. It is for book and book-like products, which includes videos. An ISBN should be assigned to each title or product, including any backlist or forthcoming titles. Each format or binding must have a separate ISBN (i.e. hardcover, paperbound, VHS video, laserdisc, e-book format, etc).

✓ *Who can assign ISBNs to a publisher?*

As the official ISBN Agency for the United States, Bowker is responsible for the assignment of the ISBN Publisher Prefix to those publishers with a residence or office in the U.S (www.isbn.org). On the ISBN org webpage you (as the publisher if you are self-producing and distributing) are required to purchase a minimum block of 10 ISBNs for \$245. That's about \$25 per number; but then you're likely to have 9 numbers too many, unless you are sure you'll want to do more than one book or book-like product. Nowhere is it communicated that you CAN get only one ISBN for \$125. You have to call this Bowker number (877-310-7333; select option #4 in the voicemail) and ask them to fax you an application to apply for one ISBN number. After you mail them a check they will send you a number that contains the code for a blank shared generic publisher.

Once an ISBN publisher prefix and associated block of numbers has been assigned to a publisher by the ISBN Agency, the publisher can assign ISBNs to publications it holds publishing rights to. However, after the ISBN Agency assigns ISBNs to a publisher, that publisher cannot resell, re-assign, transfer, or split its list of ISBNs among other publishers. These guidelines have long been established to ensure the veracity, accuracy and continued utility of the international ISBN standard.

✓ *Who is eligible for an ISBN?*

The ISBN Agency assigns ISBNs at the direct request of publishers, e-book publishers, audio cassette and video producers, software producers and museums and associations with publishing programs. Once you own an ISBN block, you're a publisher. The ISBN number is the key value that identifies the publisher of a book or book-like product in all of the online databases and inventory systems used world-wide.

✓ *How long does it take to get an ISBN?*

Allow 15 business days for non-priority processing from the time an ISBN application is received at the agency (not from the date sent by the publisher.) Priority processing is two business days from the time an application is received at the agency. Express processing is 24 business hours.

A new ISBN is required for a revised edition. Once assigned, an ISBN can never be reused. An ISBN is printed on the lower portion of the back cover of a book above the bar code and on the copyright page.

✓ *How & where do I register my ISBN?*

Once ISBNs have been assigned to products they should be reported to R.R. Bowker as the database of record for the ISBN Agency. Companies are eligible for a free listing in various directories such as Books in Print, Words on Cassette, The Software Encyclopedia, Bowker's Complete Video Directory, etc.

NOTE: Receiving just your ISBNs does **NOT** guarantee title listings. To ensure your titles get in the Books in Print database **you must submit your title information**. Book titles should be registered with Books in Print at www.bowkerlink.com

✓ *How are ISBNs used in a Bar Code & how do I obtain one?*

Once you have your ISBN (or UPC as described below), you'll need a scannable bar code of it that has to appear on the item. The bar code must match the item's UPC or ISBN number. There is software for generating your own codes. Or you can purchase bar codes for books from Bowker (for \$25 per bar code) at the same time that you are applying for ISBNs. Other sources are cheaper – and the bar code identical. Bar Code Graphics (www.createbarcodes.com) will generate bar codes from both ISBN and UPC for \$10 per code. Within a couple of minutes of ordering online you'll receive, via email, the bar code as an attached file (in ESP, the standard postscript format) which can then be pasted into your cover artwork. The following is a link to a free service for producing ISBN bar codes: <http://www.cgpp.com/bookland/isbn.html>

✓ *How do I get a UPC for my DVD?*

The official way to get a UPC is to become a member of the UCC (Uniform Code Council). You register online as a company at the following website and they issue you a company number, which then becomes part of your UPC codes

(http://www.uc-council.org/ean_ucc_system/membership/need_upc.htm). The minimum membership fee is \$750 for a block of 100 codes, plus an annual renewal of \$150. This is obviously unacceptable for most self-publishers, so there is a gray market alternative. You can buy a UPC code from a reseller, such as www.buyabarcodes.com, which caters to small-time entrepreneurs, inventors, artists and musicians. You can purchase a UPC for \$35 (after a one-time \$65 registration fee). This is a great bargain; for your \$35 you get emailed a TIFF of the actual bar code, so you can skip Step 2. If you are truly trying to minimize your initial expenses and you are sure you will need only one UPC you can purchase one (with bar code image delivered) for \$89 from <http://www.upccode.net>. Finally, www.discmakers.com offers free UPC bar code with the purchase of a replication package.

➤ MUSIC CLEARANCE

Much of the information in this section came from www.altcinema.com. Many films never get seen because the filmmakers don't think early and often about music. Using pre-recorded, popular music is difficult and expensive. And filmmakers who decide to just "use this song for now" wind up with a huge headache when someone wants to buy their film or show it on television. You should clear any and all music before using it in the cutting room.

Permission needs to be obtained from both the person/group who owns the music/song (in the form of a Synchronization contract) as well as the owner of the master of the actual recording of the song you want to use (the Master Use contract). The performer/group may or may not hold both rights, and if not, permission will have to also be obtained by the publisher (the owner of the master, which thus is most likely the record company). These databases can help you find out who owns all the permissions for the music you want to clear: ASCAP Clearance Express (<http://ascap.com/ace/index.html>), SESAC Repertory On-Line (http://www.sesac.com/repertory/repertory_main.asp), BMI Hyperrepertoire Internet (<http://repertoire.bmi.com>). And if you are thinking ahead about avoiding this problem and having someone compose music for you, you still need to have them sign a contract, called a Composer Agreement (see www.nativetelecom.org/handbook/composer_agreement.doc for an example)

➤ FULFILLMENT HOUSES

If you choose to self-distribute, you may want to investigate using a fulfillment house to meet your ordering and shipping needs. A fulfillment house, the offspring of the direct marketing industry, will handle some or all of the aspects of getting the product to your customer. They can maintain inventory, order new product, assemble, pick, pull, pack, and ship, all according to your specifications and with your labels. They will also handle the order taking, the Internet shopping cart, and provide an ordering and customer service call center if you need one. In other words, you can run an entirely virtual business, outsourcing everything to the fulfillment house, if you like. Of course, the more services they provide to you, the more you will have to pay them.

There are many many different fulfillment houses. Just google and go! You will need to find the one that works the best for you. One service that is reported to cater to the needs of small Internet start-ups is Paul Purdue's iFulfill.com in Dundee, Michigan. <http://www.ifulfill.com/>.

➤ TEACHING GUIDES

Several teachers and educational administrators were interviewed for this project and each strongly recommended developing viewing/teaching guides to go along with any media that is geared toward classroom use. It was suggested that teaching/viewing guides be offered in a variety of formats: electronic, hard copy, CD/disk. Below are links to a few of social change/issue/education viewing/teaching guides. If you haven't written a guide for one of your films/videos before, try printing out a variety to use as examples and then try drafting a few for your own media. Again, this would be a good opportunity to invite teachers to collaborate on your media projects.

Cambridge Documentary Films

go to www.cambridgedocumentaryfilms.org, click on See a listing of all our titles. If a film has a guide, it will be listed at the bottom of the summary. Click on Study Guide.

California Newsreel

Go to www.newsreel.org. On the left side of page, under Resources, click on Facilitator Guides. Choose from a wide selection of guides!

PBS TeacherSource

go to www.pbs.org. On the right side of the page, click on TeacherSource. Go to the Browse By Subject list on the left and pick any subject and any age/grade. All have guides.

Nuestro Futuro

<http://www.knowitall.org/nuestrofuturo/viewing.html>) This is a sample viewing guide for a film about Hispanic Immigrants in South Carolina. It is comprehensive and simple to follow, providing a good model.

Every Mother's Son (POV)

<http://www.pbs.org/pov/pov2004/everymothersson/for.html>

Homecoming...sometimes I am haunted by Red dirt and Clay

<http://www.pbs.org/itvs/homecoming/educators.html>

It is difficult to draft a sample viewing guide without a film around which to craft it. Instead, these sample viewing guides from a cross section of educational and/or advocacy based films are provided. These guides were selected as they offer a variety of approaches (simple, comprehensive, complex). Guides do not necessarily have to be that involved--provide some basic previewing questions, graphic organizers to guide the viewing, and after viewing questions tied to the VSC.

➤ CONTENT STANDARDS, CORE LEARNING GOALS AND CURRICULUM

If you choose to prioritize making media to get used in your schools, know the curriculum and tailor your film to work within that framework. Here is one way that has been successful for Noodlehead. When working with a group of 6th grade filmmakers, we asked them what they were studying/learning in school two-years ago. That can make a great topic for the young filmmaker as s/he has experienced it and because s/he is older, has incorporated that knowledge. Its also really cool for 4th graders to watch a film made by 6th graders as they look up to these kids but also feel peer-related to them.

--Steve Fuchs, The Noodlehead Network

In the Baltimore City Public School System (BCPSS) *content standards* are broad expectations about what each child should know and be able to do in different subjects and grade levels. They define expected student skills and knowledge and what teachers and schools should teach. In BCPSS, *content standards* are embedded in the curriculum and form the basis for each lesson's

teaching objectives. Sample *content standards* for each grade are attached. BCPSS follows the Voluntary State Curriculum (VSC), which defines more specifically what students should know and be able to do at each grade, preK through 8, in four content areas: reading/English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies.

The Voluntary State Curriculum for PreK through 8th Grade Social Studies, Science, Reading, Mathematics, Foreign Language, and Technology Education are very detailed and extensive, but quite easy to read and use. They can be used to help mediamakers identify the appropriate content and curriculum standards for whatever age/grade student and whatever topic interests him/her. And in doing so, s/he can create media that teachers can justify purchasing and using. One can simply use the VSC as a matrix to help mediamakers identify what to include so that the media meets minimum education use standards. The piece of media can include *more* than the VSC calls for; this is simply a minimum requirement for use. It will be extremely hard for a teacher to justify purchasing a piece of media that doesn't fit into the curriculum.

Maryland students must pass four *high school* assessments to receive their high school diploma: English, Government, Algebra/Data Analysis, and Biology. They take these assessments after they complete the related course. The **Core Learning Goals** for these four courses define what students need to know and be able to do on each assessment.

In addition, Core Learning Goals were drafted for other courses which are not tested on the High School Assessments. These Core Learning Goals identify what students should know and be able to do after completing these courses: Geometry, Earth/Space Science, Environment Science, Physics, Chemistry.

The Voluntary State Curriculum is currently being drafted for high school and will define what students should know and be able to do in the core content areas as well as elective subjects. VSC has been drafted for the following subjects: Algebra/Data Analysis, Government, US History, English Language Proficiency, Geometry, Fine Arts, Foreign Language, Technology Education.

At the high school level, the VSC documents integrate the format from the Pre-K - 8 VSC with the language from the Core Learning Goals. The Pre-K - 8 VSC format begins with content standards or broad, measurable statements about what students should know and be able to do. Indicator statements provide the next level of specificity and begin to narrow the focus for teachers. Finally, the objectives provide teachers with very clear information about what specific learning should occur. The High School VSC meshes the standards, indicators and objectives from the VSC documents with the core learning goals, expectations, and indicators from the Core Learning Goal documents. In the assessed content areas, the VSC document aligns the Maryland Content Standards and the Maryland Assessment Program or the High School Assessments.

Because content standards, core learning goals and the VSC are complex and often changing educational matrices, it is strongly recommended that you work teachers and/or administrators to ensure that the media you make meets the school systems minimal needs.

GLOSSARY

Distribution Terms

Distributor: A company that brings a movie to audiences. Theatrical distributors place movies in commercial movie theatres. Educational distributors sell movies to educational institutions like universities, high-schools, middle-schools, elementary schools and libraries. Broadcast distributors get movies shown by television broadcasters. Home video distributors make movies available to individuals for purchase or rental. Distributors can also be national or international and for-profit or non-profit companies.

Distribution Expenses: May include taxes, residuals, trade association dues, conversion/transmission costs, collection costs, checking costs, advertising and publicity costs, re-editing costs, print duplication, foreign version costs, transportation and shipping costs, and insurance.

Distribution on the YMDi.org website: The three types of distributors in our media submission form are: Broadcast distributor, Educational distributor and Self distributor. Broadcast distributors are TV or Cable stations that distribute videos of their airing programs. Educational distributors distribute Educational Media. Self distribution includes everyone who does not fall under the previous two definitions and fulfills the distribution needs themselves. When viewing a film listing, there is a link that says [Web] that takes you to that distributor's Web site where you can purchase the video or film you found on our site.

Domestic Rights When you enter into a relationship with a distributor regarding distributing your media, one of the things to consider is whether they will hold domestic or international rights. Domestic rights are usually defined as the right to distribute your media to the U.S. and English-speaking Canada.

Exclusive Rights: In copyright law, the exclusive right to reproduce the copyrighted work, to produce derivative works based on the copyrighted work, and to perform or display the copyrighted work. In reference to distribution, exclusive rights indicates that a company is the only entity that is allowed to distribute your movie.

Fair Use: An exception to the basic exclusive rights of copyright owners. Fair Use states that copyrighted material can be used without the permission of the owner if the material is being used for nonprofit educational purposes, in the case of first sale, or if the material is being parodied or criticized.

First Sale: First sale means that you can rent, lease or lend copyrighted material once it has been purchased. For example, once a video store has purchased a movie from a studio, it is allowed to rent it out to customers.

Fulfillment: The process of making copies of your movie, taking orders and mailing out copies to customers.

Non-Exclusive Distributor: A distributor that does not hold the sole rights to sell your movie to theatrical, educational, broadcast, home video or international markets. In other words, they have the

right to distribute your movie, but, depending on the details of your agreement, you can also distribute your movie through other avenues such as self-distribution or with the help of another non-exclusive distribution company.

Public Performance Right: the right to recite, play, dance, act, show, or transmit a work in the public domain. In the case of a motion picture or other audiovisual work, showing the work's images in sequence is considered "performance." Sound recordings - recorded versions of music or other sounds - do not have a public performance right.

Royalty Statement: Royalty is the percentage of profit earned by your video to which you, as the creator, are entitled. This percentage is determined by a contract between you and the distributor. For the services it provides to you, the distributor will most likely keep a percentage of the profit that your video makes.

Specialized Distribution: As opposed to commercial distribution, distribution to a limited target audience, in a smaller number of theaters, with a limited advertising budget and reliance upon publicity, reviews and word-of-mouth to build an audience for the picture.

Sub-Distributor: In theatrical releases, distributors who handle a specific geographic territory. They are contracted by the main distributor, who coordinates the distribution campaign and marketing.

APPENDIX

➤ DISTRIBUTOR TABLE

The table below identifies some distributors (and a couple of broadcasters) whose catalogues carry a variety of different types of independent films/videos/dvds. This table is not exhaustive—it provides only a sample.

Distributor/Website	General Info
Altcinema www.altcinema.com	Altcinema offers distribution services to emerging and established filmmakers. Distribution services include: film festival submissions, film rentals and sales, rental and sales order fulfillment, book keeping, and royalty payments. These services are free to filmmakers whose films are accepted for distribution. To apply, go to website. In addition, Altcinema is continually gathering information of use to women, lesbian, and queer film & video artists.
Appalshop www.appalshop.org	Appalshop is a non-profit multi-disciplinary arts and education center in the heart of Appalachia producing original films, video, theater, music and spoken-word recordings, radio, photography, multimedia, and books.
California Newsreel www.newsreel.org	<p>California Newsreel produces and distributes cutting edge, social justice films that inspire, educate and engage audiences. Founded in 1968, Newsreel is the oldest non-profit, social issue documentary film center in the country, the first to marry media production and contemporary social movements.</p> <p>They describe themselves as a leading resource center for the advancement of racial justice and diversity, and the study of African American life and history as well as African culture and politics. In 2006, we launched a new thematic focus for our work: the Global Economy, with an emphasis on the international division of labor. In the years ahead we look forward to continuing our traditions of innovation and responsible advocacy by providing films that help inform, educate and organize.</p> <p>The standard distribution contract is 5 years exclusive, US and territories. Producer gets 30% royalty of gross revenue.</p>
Canyon Cinema www.canyoncinema.com	<p>Focus is on experimental/avante garde. Distributes Regular 8, Super 8mm and 16mm films. Prints remain the property of the filmmaker. The percentage split is currently 50% to filmmaker, 50% to Canyon. There is a \$60 annual distribution fee.</p> <p>Videotapes are accepted for lease purposes only and only Canyon</p>

	Cinema shareholder may submit tapes. 60% of lease price goes to the videomaker and 40% is retained by Canyon Cinema.
Cinema Guild, The www.cinemaguild.com	Founded in 1972, The Cinema Guild is a leading distributor of independent, foreign and documentary films, with a collection of over 900 acclaimed and award-winning titles.
Deep Dish TV www.deepdishtv.org	<p>Deep Dish TV is the first national satellite network, linking local access producers and programmers, independent video makers, activists, and other individuals who support the idea and reality of a progressive television network. While commercial networks present a homogenous and one-dimensional view of society, Deep Dish thrives on diversity. Instead of television that encourages passivity, Deep Dish distributes creative programming that educates and activates.</p> <p>Its programs are shown on over 200 cable systems around the country, as well as selected public television stations, and received by thousands of satellite dish viewers nationwide. They are also used by teachers and community groups for group screenings and discussion.</p>
The Film-Maker's Cooperative www.film-makerscoop.com	<p>A non-exclusive distribution organization that does not "select" work, or look for any particular style, genre or budget.</p> <p>To join the Coop as a filmmaker/videomaker all you need is a film or video. The membership fee is \$40 annually. You must also deposit your work at the Coop for it to be listed for distribution.</p> <p>The Coop is completely non-exclusive (you still own your work, you can still show your work, you can make use of other distribution as long as it is also non-exclusive or doesn't mind that your work is also in the Coop).</p> <p>You set the rental price (the minimum for any rental being \$20). You receive 60% of your rentals, while 40% goes to the Coop for overhead. Minimum rental fee is \$20 and orders must be placed 6-8 weeks in advance .</p>
Filmmaker's Library www.filmakers.com	Has collection of award-winning documentary films and videos on a range of issues. Focus is the educational market, but they also do some broadcast and festival distribution. They have over 500 films in their catalogue and they acquire 50-60 new films every year. They distribute a number of student works and are open to youth-produced submissions.
First Run/Icarus Films www.frif.com	<p>One of the largest distributors of independent theatrical films and home videos, they distribute over 875 independent documentaries to non-theatrical markets in North America.</p> <p>Each year, 12-15 new theatrical titles and 40-50 home video releases are added. Unsolicited videotapes are not accepted, but you may fax a one-page description of your film to 212-989-76n49, to the attention of ACQUISITIONS.</p>

<p>Free Speech TV www.freespeech.org</p>	<p>Free Speech TV is a publicly-supported, independent, non-profit TV channel that is a project of Public Communicators, Inc. It is available nationally, 24/7, on DISH Satellite Network. Selected programs are available on 163 community access cable stations in 34 states.</p> <p>Free Speech TV broadcasts independently-produced documentaries dealing with social, political, cultural, and environmental issues; commissions and produces original programming; develops programming partnerships and collaborations with social justice organizations; provides special live broadcasts from remote locations; and maintains an adjunct Web site that hosts one of the Internet's largest collection of progressive audio and video content.</p> <p>About 97% of programming is from outside production and 3% is produced in-house; about 5-15% of on air programming comes through "blind" submission; much of the rest comes through solicitation from distributors (Calif Newsreel, First Run/Icarus, Cinema Guild) and different film festivals; length of programming is a mix.</p> <p>Non-exclusive; licenses somethings for no fee and some are paid a nominal fee. Looking for "activist" programming.</p>
<p>GPN www.gpn.unl.edu</p>	<p>Representing leading independent producers across the country and around the world, GPN is the largest nonprofit distributor in the instructional/educational market.</p> <p>GPN carries over 3,000 titles and distributes over 150,000 educational programs annually, via videocassette and a variety of digital formats. With instructional materials that reach millions of students each year, children and adults throughout the world are able to benefit from GPN's award-winning productions—now made even more accessible with our expanded Web-based sales.</p>
<p>Lowave www.lowave.com</p>	<p>Lowave is an independent DVD label with the objective of discovering and promoting contemporary film and video art. Its ambition is to create a new marketplace for the work of cutting-edge artists and filmmakers, under recognized by the traditional distribution channels, by making them accessible to the public via the DVD format. With DVD, experimental film can finally find an audience beyond the film festival circuit.</p>
<p>Microcinema International www.microcinema.com</p>	<p>Founded in 1996, Microcinema International is a leading international rights manager, exhibitor, and specialty markets distributor of the "moving image arts." Microcinema specializes in the acquisition, exhibition, and distribution of independently produced moving images of an artistic and socially relevant nature.</p> <p>Their main activities include:</p> <p><i>-Microcinema Distribution: A distribution company that focuses on the</i></p>

	<p>selling and licensing of DVD works from around the world to traditional wholesale and retail outlets and to modern digital channels, television, mobile TV, mobile telephony, podcasting, and exhibition.</p> <p><i>-Independent Exposure:</i> Microcinema's Independent Exposure is a touring screening program of independent films, videos, and digital art that has been in existence since 1996. Independent Exposure is screened worldwide at various microcinemas and alternative venues and festivals around the world. Microcinema has presented the short film, video and digital works of over 2000 artists in 44 countries, including Palestine, Antarctica and South Africa.</p> <p><i>-Blackchair Collection:</i> A new label dedicated to promulgating the works of moving image artists via DVD and other channels.</p>
<p>New Day Films www.newday.com</p>	<p>Premiere distribution cooperative for social-issue media, invites membership applications from independent film and video makers with titles for non-theatrical distribution.</p> <p>Self-distribution within the context of a co-op. Sells films to educational organizations nationwide, including high schools, colleges, universities, and libraries, among others. New Day members screen and select new titles from among those submitted by makers seeking admission to the co-op.</p>
<p>Nomadsland.com</p>	<p>A new distribution platform for video artists to tell compelling stories about their world and the world in which we live. It uses VOD to help a film find maximum audience. To read more about this platform go to http://www.nomadsland.com/FAQ.htm</p> <p>NomadsLand generates revenues through advertising, pay-per-download viewing and in some cases traditional distribution on DVD, TV and cinema. They split 50% of revenue with filmmakers. Filmmakers can upload their films to NomadsLand on a non-exclusive basis and remove their film at anytime. Royalty revenues will be paid directly to filmmakers on a monthly basis in perpetuity via PayPal.</p> <p>To read the submission guidelines to to www.nomadsland.com/submissionguidelines.htm</p>
<p>Noodlehead Network www.noodlehead.com</p>	<p>The NoodleHead Network is an award-winning video company based in Burlington, Vermont that produces, markets, and distributes educational videotapes created from a kid's eye view. Kids play an integral role in the creation of each tape-from script development, to acting, to editing. Then a group of "ex-kids"-writers, producers, and educators translate those ideas into unique videos that educate and inspire.</p> <p>They look for films of the following length for the following audiences: Elem: 8-15 min; Mid Schl: 10-20 min; High Schl: 15-30 min</p>

	<p>Non-exclusive contracts with the revenue split being 25% to producer and 75% to the distributor. Media must present "balanced" view and nothing too political.</p>
<p>Video Data Bank www.vdb.org</p>	<p>Focus is experimental and independent video art and some experimental documentary. Collects, promotes, distributes, exhibits and preserves the work of video artists. They do not deal with film. Has three collections: Early Video Art, Independent Video and Alternative Media, taped interviews On Art and Artists.</p> <p>Non-exclusive distributor with worldwide distribution--primary clients include universities, libraries, museums. Royalty for producers is between 50 and 60%, with high end usually for broadcast.</p>
<p>V Tape www.vtape.org</p>	<p>Will be of limited use as 85% of artists must be Canadian. Catalogue has very wide selection. All rights remain with the artist, including the right to self-distribute and promote. Non-exclusive distributor. Relies on artist involvement in the ongoing promotion of their work.</p>
<p>Women Make Movies www.wmm.com</p>	<p>Works submitted for acquisition must be directed or co-directed by a woman, and its subject must be about women or about issues with specific relevance to women's lives.</p> <p>Selection of work is based on the strength and originality of the work as it relates to distribution guidelines. exceptional works in all formats and styles, including feature length and short documentaries, narratives, experimental works and animation, especially those that challenge traditional aesthetics and forms. We highly encourage women of color, lesbians and women with disabilities to apply.</p> <p>Works are reviewed and chosen by our Acquisitions Committee through a collective process. Approximately 20-30 new films are acquired for distribution each year. Applications and tapes are reviewed on an ongoing basis. The review and selection process generally takes 8-12 weeks. Generally do not distribute films under 10 minutes or titles which are already in home video/DVD distribution.</p>

➤ ABOUT US

THIS GUIDE IS PRODUCED BY THESE BALTIMORE INDEPENDENT MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS:



Megaphone Project
megaphoneproject.org

Megaphone Project produces low-cost documentaries that amplify voices for social and economic justice in Maryland. We specialize in making short, inexpensive, issue-based productions for advocates to show to community members, decision makers and opinion leaders as part of organized campaigns for change.



Wide Angle Youth Media
wideanglemedia.org

Wide Angle Youth Media provides Baltimore youth with opportunities to tell their own stories using video technology, public speaking, and critical thinking skills. Through after school programs, community events, our annual Youth Media Festival, and our youth-run television show, Wide Angle strives to make media make a difference.



Kids on the Hill
kidsonthehill.org

Kids on the Hill is an art and media organization offering young people support and the tools to become thinkers and leaders in their community through the exploration of social issues, art action projects, and civic engagement.



Creative Alliance MovieMakers
creativealliance.org

Creative Alliance MovieMakers (CAmm), our media resource group, offers workshops, screenings, rental production equipment and editing suite, and networking to folks who work in (and/or love) film, video and digital media. Created by artists working in film, video, and digital media, Creative Alliance MovieMakers' mission is to establish Baltimore as a national center for distinctive and significant film and new media-making. Building on Baltimore's heritage of original voices, CAmm cultivates a community that supports the creation and promotion of innovative work in film, video and new media.