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# Patron-Driven Access to Streaming Video: Profile of Kanopy Streaming

by **Julie A. DeCesare** (Assistant Professor, Providence College)

**Abstract:** *Patron-driven access is a relatively new model for licensing streaming video. This article profiles the vendor Kanopy Streaming and presents why this model of licensing might be a good fit for your library.*

Libraries are living in two worlds of collection development. “Just-in-case” collection development allows us to build resources we feel our communities and patrons want, while “just-in-time” gives the power of collecting, acquisition, and access to our patrons (Arougheti, 2014). Patron pay-per-view programs for eBooks and articles have been established by vendors (such as **EBL**) and journal publishers (such as **Elsevier**). In both models, instead of the library subscribing to a pool of content “just-in-case,” the vendor makes the collection searchable by the patron, but only charges the library for what is viewed in that “just-in-time” moment.

Many factors play into whether this model will work for a library — budget, staffing, subject area, technical requirements, culture — but ultimately, the library becomes an unseen fiscal agent for the patron. So how does this model work for streaming video?

Take, for example, **Kanopy Streaming** and their pay-per-video and acquisitions options for academic institutions.

We know that media collections are shifting from physical to digital. The consumer market has surged with digital video content available instantly to users — YouTube, HuluPlus, Netflix, Amazon Instant and cable on-demand services are just a few (DeCesare, 2014). These models are geared towards individual users and, until recently, library licensing for streaming content has been limited. Current streaming video licensing models cover the gamut in terms of licensing and acquisitions contracts and needs (Farrelly, 2014). All libraries and our institutions have very different needs, budgets, infrastructure — what *kind*

of library is only the beginning — academic, public, special, school, etc.

Vendor options for streaming video are certainly not one size fits all. Libraries need to have options in order to bring their patrons streaming resources in a fiscally responsible manner, but like the eBook market, there are many issues and options to consider. It is a complicated area and for a recent publication about all the licensing and models available for streaming video, I highly recommend **Deg Farrelly’s** chapter on “Streaming Video” in the book *“Rethinking Collection Development and Management”* (edited by **Albitz, R., Avery, C., and Zabel, D.**).

Like other digital resources, streaming video frees users up from the “one-copy-per-user” model, provides instant access with the appropriate technical requirements (network access, etc.), and allows faculty and instructors more flexibility on how and when they assign multimedia materials. They are not limited to classroom screenings, outside of class viewings, limited copies, or the hours of physical space for viewing. Faculty can incorporate these hyperlinked resources into their online course and learning management systems to enable more time for discussion, reflection, and collaboration.

The platform for streaming video is just as important as the content. Tools to link, embed, share, annotate, and edit are becoming necessities in teaching and consuming streaming video for instructors.

Collection development is not one-sided, nor is it simple when it comes to visual resources. Acquisition of physical media items has always been unique — public performance rights, closed captioning rights, format avail-

ability, migration of format, and limited access to one “viewer” at a time were common challenges of a physical media title or collection. Also, academic media titles, documentaries, and educational titles were not inexpensive when all these considerations were taken into account. The cost of one VHS or DVD could range from \$100-\$500, depending on the vendor and the rights acquired. DVDs had a shorter shelf life than VHS, due to the ability to break, scratch, or skip.

As I mentioned earlier, there are many options for licensing online video content. For example, subscription of hosted streaming video resources is a popular model. Institutions may opt to collect individual streaming titles, as they would physical media — on a title-by-title basis, by the request of their patrons, and acting as the fiscal/ordering agent between the patron and vendor. Or libraries can opt to subscribe to full video databases. The streams are hosted and accessed from the vendor’s servers. Another model available from some vendors is to purchase the database and content in perpetuity, with an annual hosting fee.

What are the limitations to the title-by-title subscription model? For a library with a limited budget and demand for media, it can be a good fit, but there are several issues. There are many steps to the purchase, whether it is initiated by a patron request or by a librarian. “Just-in-time” is not reflected. Content specialists (subject liaisons) often have a lot of other responsibilities, and “just-in-case” collecting can be delayed. Faculty requests can also be problematic, they also have limits on their time, and often when they have a request, it reflects an immediate need, which cannot be filled by multiple emails to a vendor/price quotes, etc.

Subscription funds are often tied up (very often if a subscription is added, another needs to be “non-renewed” to maintain the subscription budget balance). These exchanges and steps can slow the licensing and acquisition process down greatly.

Thinking about these limitations, why would a pay-per-view service for streaming video be worthwhile? Two reasons come to mind. One, it frees up librarians and libraries from title selection and puts the power and selection process in the hands of the users (Cleary, Humphrey, and Bates, 2014). Two, it would streamline the purchase process, allowing users immediate access to the title they are interested in. **Kanopy Streaming** ([www.kanopy.com](http://www.kanopy.com)).

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## Julie A. DeCesare

**Julie A. DeCesare** is Head of Research and Education for the **Phillips Memorial Library at Providence College**. **Julie** has a lifelong interest in film studies, audiovisual collections, and multimedia. Throughout her career, **Julie** has worked closely with instructional designers and faculty to bring multimedia content to course sites and to create vibrant Web-based and physical audiovisual collections. She has recently added multimedia-on-the-Web evaluation to her repertoire. In a previous life, **Julie** has held the positions of Digital Media/Film Studies Reference Librarian at **Boston College** and Technical Coordinator of Media Services at **Brown University**. She holds a BA in Comparative Literature with a concentration on Film Studies from the **University of Massachusetts, Amherst** and a MLIS from **Simmons College**. **Julie** also teaches Digital Research Technologies at the **Marlboro College Graduate Center** in the Educational Technology Master program, and is recently a contributing author to the **IGI Global** title, *Enhancing Instruction with Visual Media*. **ALA TechSource** recently published the *Library Technology Report Streaming Video Resources for Teaching, Learning, and Research* (February/March 2014), which was written by **Julie**. 🍷

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*kanopystreaming.com*) has introduced a model that supports this, as well as the more standard licensing models.

According to the “About Us” page, **Kanopy** provides a curated, online video platform with over 25,000 individual videos from well-known educational filmmakers and production houses. Once the platform is in place, **Kanopy** adds videos to the institutions platform in three ways — via their browseable catalog, via a hosting service which allows the institution to upload videos, and through a “search and find” service, where their acquisitions team helps track down a title and the rights available for a subscribing institution (Kanopy “About Us,” 2014).

**Kanopy** allows libraries to customize their platforms with full collections (1-year or 3-year licensing), individual titles (1-year or 3-year licensing), and/or a patron pay-per-view or patron-driven access (PDA) model. The PDA model allows institutional users to access the **Kanopy Streaming** platform via IP/Proxy. An individual title can have up to four “views” at over 60 seconds before a license is “activated.” Once a license is activated, the library can choose a 1-year license or a 3-year license.

All individual films are given the same price, and price is based on an institution’s FTE. MARC records are accessible through the institution’s administration portal, along with user and access statistics. The institution has access to a dedicated administrative portal, which includes statistics at a very granular level (title usage to time usage). This is particularly helpful when it comes down to renewing a license — all usage can be seen and evaluated to inform the renewal or non-renewal process.

**Kanopy** also sends out bulk 90-day alerts when a license is about to expire. If a license expires, the patron cannot tell; instead of an option to “watch” the video, the user will be prompted to “request” the video and the license can be reinstated. **Kanopy** also sends alerts if there are any budget perimeters set and they are about to be crossed/denied. This provides an easy-access way to monitor accounts.

For patrons, the system is seamless. They browse, hit play, and watch. They do not know

when a license is activated at the fourth view, but have an option to email acquisitions staff if they choose. If they share a link of the video to their class, the “views” will happen faster, but the institution will only be charged once, even if it is viewed hundreds of times. It is up to the institution to decide what patrons will be able to “browse.” Institutions can control access to subject collections, or they can make the entire catalog available for browsing.

**Kanopy Streaming** provides access to many well-known and respected educational productions and collections. Subject areas include the arts, humanities, business, education, health, sciences, and media. Some well-known distributors, such as **California Newsreel**, **First Run Features**, and **Document Educational Resources**, are just a few with collections included in **Kanopy** (Kanopy “Supplier Channels,” 2014). Right now, the **Media Education Foundation** collection is not available under the PDA option, but individual titles and collections from the **MEF** can be licensed in 1-year and 3-year intervals. They would still be available on the **Kanopy** platform and licensed content is available alongside the unlicensed content, so the patron is not missing anything when they browse the content. Feature films are also a challenge to institutional licensing, but **Kanopy** is on that path, with a selection of classic Criterion Collection films. It is just a matter of time before feature film distributors look closer at models for institutional licensing.

High statistics in streaming video use is still closely tied with classroom and assignment use. Streaming video systems need to support faculty and students with the tools made available to them.

Once a title is licensed, the **Kanopy** platform includes a playlist and clip-creation tool, which aids faculty and students in creating learning resources. Unique links are created when a video is modified, edited, or made into a playlist. All videos have captions and interactive transcripts, which aid in accessibility and searchability of the video. Permalinks and embed code are available for each title, so videos can be integrated into learning management systems and content management systems. Licensing also covers institutions for public performance; under the agreement, the screening has to be affiliated with the

institution and no charge can be associated to attend the screening. As with all databases and digital platforms, marketing and outreach are still crucial, so patrons know the platform, how it works, and where to find content. **Kanopy** allows for preview viewing, so faculty can get a good sense of the title before any further agreement or access is made.

Ultimately, we are still in a state of unrest with streaming video, but libraries are choosing the items and resources that work best for their patrons. Streaming video is one of the more complicated areas to collect in, but the breadth of content, flexibility of licensing, availability of user tools, and transparency of usage and statistics, makes **Kanopy Streaming** an interesting competitor to other online video vendors, and a worthwhile partner to libraries and institutions.

Additional research from Professor **Julie DeCesare** on “Navigating Multimedia” appears in the **IGI Global** publication, *Enhancing Instruction with Visual Media*.

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