

There's Now A Smarter Way to Rent How-To DVDs

ARLINGTON, Mass. - Oct. 19, 2006 - Renting from NetFlix is fine when there's time for popcorn and a movie. But when there's a project that needs to be done, SmartFlix has come up with the answer.

Formerly Technical Video Rental, SmartFlix has recognized the growing demand in the do-it-yourself market, and start fresh when it launches its new name and website Oct. 19. With more than 3,200 titles covering roughly 100 categories, SmartFlix offers the most expansive library of how-to DVDs in the world. No other movie-rental store - online or brick-and-mortar - provides the titles found at SmartFlix. Whether it's aircraft piloting or the Zen of screaming, SmartFlix has everything from A to Z for the hobbyist and do-it-yourself enthusiast.

"Coworkers, friends and I all brainstormed trying to come up with a name that captured the essence of what we did," said Travis Corcoran, founder of the Arlington-based company. "The core idea was that we rent out flix that make our customers more knowledgeable and let them solve real problems and give them real skills."

Adding a new skill set is a trend that has captured the imagination of many Americans. In a 2005 survey published by MSN.com, just 29% of respondents planning a home improvement project said they would hire a professional. It's an attitude that has led to the success of improvement stores like Home Depot and created HGTV, a television network devoted solely to an audience interested in tackling projects on their own.

But where Home Depot and HGTV end, SmartFlix begins. Detailed instructional DVDs that typically retail for \$60-\$100, can be rented through SmartFlix for an average of \$9.99 per week, including round-trip postage in the U.S. The DVDs take viewers step-by-step through each project or hobby from beginning to end in real-time, not the edited, sliced up version found on the various cable shows.

"I think HGTV and shows on other channels are a great thing, but they've been dumbed down a bit," said Corcoran, a Cornell University computer science graduate who started the company in 2003. "I'm all in favor of entertainment, but I think that SmartFlix serves a related, but slightly different niche. If you want to see someone else rebuild a classic car from frame to paintjob in 22 minutes, watch TV. If you want to learn how to rebuild an engine yourself, rent one of our DVDs."

The SmartFlix website, found at www.smartflix.com, includes a simple guide and search engine for renting from its wide selection. There's also a blog where the experts share their advice in weekly interviews. And, if a new customer to SmartFlix needs convincing, there are dozens of testimonials, with one in particular that says it all: "I can actually do this without being a rocket scientist."

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