

## From Betamax to Blockbuster: Video Stores and the Invention of Movies on Video



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## FROM BETAMAX TO BLOCKBUSTER: VIDEO STORES AND THE INVENTION OF MOVIES ON VIDEO



MIT Press Ltd, United States, 2010. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 218 x 146 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. The first video cassette recorders were promoted in the 1970s as an extension of broadcast television technology--a time-shifting device, a way to tape TV shows. Early advertising for Sony's Betamax told potential purchasers You don't have to miss Kojak because you're watching Columbo. But within a few years, the VCR had been transformed from a machine that recorded television into an extension of the movie theater into the home. This was less a physical transformation than a change in perception, but one that relied on the very tangible construction of a network of social institutions to support this new marketplace for movies. In *From Betamax to Blockbuster*, Joshua Greenberg explains how the combination of neighborhood video stores and the VCR created a world in which movies became tangible consumer goods. Greenberg charts a trajectory from early videophile communities to the rise of the video store--complete with theater marquee lights, movie posters, popcorn, and clerks who offered expert advice on which movies to rent. The result was more than a new industry; by placing movies on cassette in the hands (and control) of consumers, video rental and sale led to a renegotiation of the boundary between medium and message, and ultimately a new relationship between audiences and movies. Eventually, Blockbuster's top-down franchise store model crowded local video stores out of the market, but the recent rise of Netflix, iTunes, and other technologies have reopened old questions about what a movie is and how (and where) it ought to be watched. By focusing on the spaces in between manufacturers and consumers, Greenberg's account offers a fresh perspective on consumer technology, illustrating how the initial transformation of movies...



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