

Netlyse: A Netflix analysis with R and Quarto

Faranak Rahimi

Nils Rechberger

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Abstract

Netflix has become one of the most influential global streaming platforms, offering a rapidly expanding catalogue of movies and television shows produced across a wide range of countries. As the platform continues to grow, understanding how its content catalogue evolves over time provides valuable insights into content strategy, internationalisation, and audience engagement. This project presents a data-driven analysis of Netflix's content catalogue using publicly available datasets and reproducible analytical workflows implemented in R and Quarto.

The analysis is based on two complementary datasets: a dataset containing metadata on Netflix movies and TV shows, and a dataset providing audience evaluation metrics from IMDb¹, including IMDb scores and vote counts. These datasets are combined to enable a comprehensive exploration of both supply-side characteristics, such as content type, release year, and country of production, and demand-side indicators related to audience reception and popularity.

The study adopts an exploratory and descriptive analytical approach. It examines how the size and composition of Netflix's catalogue have changed over time, with a particular focus on the balance between movies and TV shows and the geographical distribution of content production. In addition, the analysis investigates the relationship between the runtime of a content and its popularity among voters.

Rather than aiming to establish causal relationships, the project seeks to identify trends, distributions, and structural patterns within Netflix's catalogue. By combining descriptive statistics and visual exploration, the analysis provides an overview of Netflix's content evolution and audience response. The findings contribute to a broader understanding of how a global streaming platform curates its content portfolio and how different types of content are perceived by audiences.

¹<https://www.imdb.com/>

Introduction

Over the past two decades, digital streaming platforms have fundamentally transformed the way audiovisual content is produced, distributed, and consumed. Among these platforms, Netflix has emerged as a dominant global actor, reshaping not only viewing habits but also the structure of the entertainment industry itself. With a presence in more than 190 countries and a continuously expanding catalogue of movies and television shows, Netflix offers a unique case for data-driven analysis of global media production and consumption.

The rapid growth of Netflix has been accompanied by significant strategic shifts. These include a transition from licensed content to original productions, an increased emphasis on episodic television formats, and a strong focus on international markets. As a result, Netflix's content catalogue reflects both technological change and broader cultural and economic trends within the global media landscape. Understanding how this catalogue has evolved over time provides valuable insights into platform strategy, audience targeting, and the globalization of media content.

This project aims to analyse the development of Netflix's content catalogue using publicly available datasets and reproducible data analysis methods implemented in R² and presents with Quarto Markdown³. By combining metadata on Netflix titles with audience evaluation data from IMDb, the analysis seeks to explore patterns of content growth, composition, geographical diversity, and audience reception. Rather than focusing on individual titles, the study adopts a macro-level perspective, treating Netflix's catalogue as a dynamic dataset that evolves over time.

A brief History of Netflix

Netflix is a subscription-based video-on-demand streaming service founded in the United States in 1997⁴. Initially, the company operated as a mail-based DVD rental service, offering customers access to a broad catalogue of films without the physical limitations of traditional video rental stores. This business model allowed Netflix to compete directly with established retailers such as Blockbuster by leveraging a so-called “long tail” strategy, in which a large number of niche titles collectively generated significant demand.

In the mid-2000s, advances in internet infrastructure, including increased bandwidth and reduced data transfer costs, enabled Netflix to fundamentally transform its business model. The introduction of online streaming marked a decisive shift away from physical media and positioned Netflix at the forefront of digital content delivery. This transition not only reduced distribution costs but also allowed the company to collect detailed, real-time data on user behaviour.

²<https://www.r-project.org/other-docs.html>

³<https://quarto.org/>

⁴<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Netflix>

Over time, Netflix increasingly invested in original content production, launching its first original series in the early 2010s. This strategic move reduced dependence on external content providers and enabled greater control over intellectual property. Simultaneously, Netflix expanded aggressively into international markets, commissioning locally produced content in multiple languages and targeting diverse regional audiences. These developments have resulted in a highly heterogeneous catalogue, making Netflix an ideal subject for empirical analysis of global content strategies.

An Analytical View

A defining characteristic of Netflix's success lies in its systematic use of data to inform strategic decisions. Unlike traditional broadcasters, Netflix operates in a digital environment that enables continuous monitoring of user interactions, such as viewing duration, content completion rates, and engagement patterns. These data allow Netflix to optimise content recommendations, inform commissioning decisions, and evaluate audience response at scale.⁵

From an analytical perspective, Netflix represents a data-rich ecosystem in which content characteristics, production contexts, and audience evaluations intersect. By analysing metadata such as release year, content type, country of production, and runtime alongside IMDb scores and vote counts, it becomes possible to explore both supply-side and demand-side dimensions of the platform. IMDb scores serve as a proxy for perceived content quality, while vote counts provide an indicator of popularity and audience engagement.

This project adopts a quantitative, exploratory approach to analyse these dimensions. Using structured datasets and reproducible workflows, the analysis seeks to identify trends, distributions, and relationships within Netflix's catalogue. The emphasis is not on causal inference, but on descriptive and comparative insights that contribute to a broader understanding of how a global streaming platform curates and positions its content over time.

Research Questions

How has Netflix's content catalogue evolved over time in terms of content characteristics, international production, and audience evaluation?

The main research question aims to explore the structural development of Netflix's content catalogue over time. As one of the largest global streaming platforms, Netflix continuously adapts its content strategy to changing market conditions, audience preferences, and international expansion goals. By analysing trends in content growth, content type, and country of production, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive overview of how Netflix has shaped its catalogue and positioned itself within the global entertainment industry.

⁵<https://www.nplusonemag.com/issue-49/essays/casual-viewing/>

To address this overarching research question in a structured manner, the following sub-questions are formulated. Each subquestion focuses on a specific aspect of Netflix's content strategy and contributes to a deeper understanding of the platform's evolution.

1. How does the relationship between release year and date added reflect Netflix's strategy in balancing newly produced content with the acquisition and digitisation of older titles?

This question examines the relationship between the original release year of a title and the date it was added to Netflix in order to better understand the platform's content acquisition strategy. By analysing how recently released productions compare to older titles in terms of when they appear in the catalogue, the study aims to identify whether Netflix primarily prioritises contemporary content or actively invests in digitising and licensing older films and series.

Understanding this relationship provides insight into how Netflix balances freshness and relevance with catalogue depth. A strong concentration of recently released titles may indicate a focus on keeping the platform up to date and competitive, whereas the inclusion of older titles suggests a strategy of enriching the library with classics and historically significant content.

This analysis helps to contextualise subsequent findings by offering a structural perspective on how the platform curates its catalogue over time, not just in terms of quantity, but in terms of the age profile of the content being added.

2. How has the balance between movies and TV shows evolved on Netflix?

This question focuses on changes in the composition of Netflix's catalogue, specifically the relative proportions of movies and TV shows over time. Movies and TV shows differ significantly in production costs, audience engagement, and viewing behaviour, making this distinction particularly relevant for understanding Netflix's strategic focus.

By examining how the balance between these two content types has changed, the study aims to assess whether Netflix has increasingly prioritised episodic content, which often encourages longer viewer engagement, or whether movies continue to play a central role in the platform's offering. This analysis contributes to understanding how Netflix aligns its content portfolio with user consumption patterns and long-term retention strategies.

3. Which countries provide the most content for Netflix, and which genres are most represented in the Netflix catalogue?

This question examines the geographical composition of Netflix's content catalogue alongside the distribution of genres across the platform. By analysing which countries contribute the largest number of titles, the study provides insight into the dominant production regions represented in Netflix's offerings.

In addition, examining the overall genre distribution allows for a better understanding of the thematic structure of the catalogue. Identifying the most frequently represented genres highlights the types of content that are most prominent on the platform.

Together, the country and genre analyses offer a broader perspective on how Netflix's catalogue is structured in terms of geographic representation and thematic diversity. While the analysis does not directly assess production specialisation by country, it provides an overview of the dominant regions and content categories shaping the platform's global portfolio.

4. How are IMDb scores distributed across countries and genres?

This question focuses on audience evaluation and popularity of Netflix titles using IMDb data. IMDb scores provide a measure of perceived content quality. Analysing variables like this allows for a more comprehensive understanding of how Netflix content is received by viewers.

By examining the distribution of IMDb scores across the catalogue, this question aims to identify general patterns in audience ratings and popularity. Furthermore, this analysis contributes to understanding how content type influences both perceived quality and audience participation.

Together, these research questions provide a structured framework for analysing the evolution of Netflix's content catalogue. They allow for a comprehensive examination of growth patterns, content composition, geographical diversity, and audience targeting, thereby supporting a holistic understanding of Netflix's content strategy over time.

Project Time Plan

The project was organised into clearly defined phases to ensure a structured and transparent workflow from initial planning to final reporting.

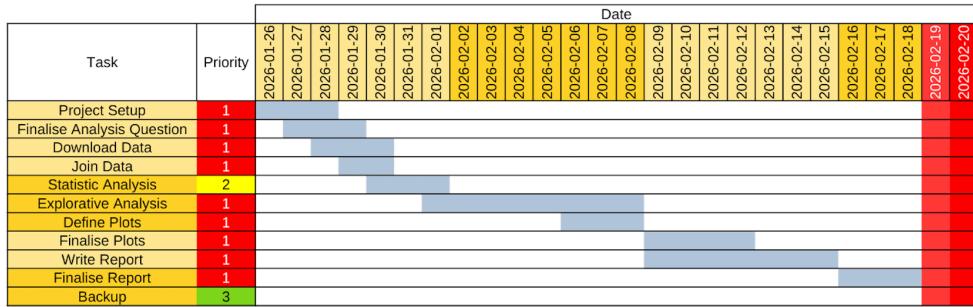


Figure 1: Project Time Plan

The project time plan presented above provides an overview of the structured workflow that guided the development of this analysis from the initial concept to the final report submission. The plan was designed to ensure a clear progression between phases, allowing sufficient time for data preparation, analysis, interpretation, and documentation while maintaining a logical and manageable project structure.

The first phase focused on project setup and conceptual planning. During this stage, the analytical scope was defined, research questions were formulated, and relevant datasets were identified. Establishing a clear analytical direction early in the process was essential to ensure that later methodological decisions remained aligned with the overall objectives of the study.

The second phase concentrated on data acquisition and integration. The datasets were collected, inspected, and merged into a unified analytical base. Particular attention was given to data consistency and completeness to ensure that no relevant information was lost during the joining process. This stage created the foundation for all subsequent analyses.

Following integration, the project entered the exploratory and analytical phase. Descriptive statistics and visualisations were used to explore patterns within the data, identify trends, and support the research questions. This iterative process involved refining plots, testing different visual perspectives, and continuously interpreting results to build a coherent analytical narrative.

The final phase focused on interpretation, writing, and refinement. Insights derived from the analysis were translated into written explanations, discussion points, and conclusions. Additional time was allocated for improving clarity, ensuring reproducibility, polishing visualisations, and performing consistency checks across the document.

Overall, the time plan illustrates a structured and sequential workflow in which each phase builds upon the outcomes of the previous stage. By following this planned approach, the project maintained analytical consistency and ensured that the final report was both coherent and methodologically transparent.

Data Overview

Data Sample

Dataset “Netflix Movies and TV Shows”

This dataset serves as a comprehensive longitudinal archive of the Netflix library, chronicling the evolution of the platform’s global streaming catalog. It systematically catalogs every available movie and television production, offering detailed insights into the creative teams—ranging from directorial leadership to ensemble casts. By documenting core attributes such as release timelines, geographic origins, and playback durations, the data provides a holistic snapshot of the shifting landscape of digital entertainment across diverse genres and international markets.⁶

Table 1: Sample of Netflix Titles and their Origin

Title	Country	Duration
Dick Johnson Is Dead	United States	90 min
Blood & Water	South Africa	2 Seasons
Ganglands	NA	1 Season
Jailbirds New Orleans	NA	1 Season
Kota Factory	India	2 Seasons
Midnight Mass	NA	1 Season
My Little Pony: A New Generation	NA	91 min
Sankofa	United States, Gh...	125 min
The Great British Baking Show	United Kingdom	9 Seasons
The Starling	United States	104 min

Dataset “Netflix IMDb Scores”

The Netflix TV Shows and Movies dataset offers a robust repository of metadata for titles hosted on the platform. Beyond basic identifiers such as title and type (Movie or TV Show), the dataset encompasses descriptive content summaries and temporal data, including release years and age certification ratings. Crucially, it provides metrics for runtime—distinguishing between

⁶<https://www.kaggle.com/datasets/shivamb/netflix-shows>

movie durations and episodic lengths—alongside critical audience indicators: IMDb scores and IMDb vote counts. These variables collectively facilitate a multi-dimensional analysis of both content structure and viewer reception.⁷

Table 2: Overview of Netflix Titles and IMDb User Ratings

Title	Content Type	IMDb Score
Taxi Driver	MOVIE	8.3
Monty Python and the Holy Grail	MOVIE	8.2
Life of Brian	MOVIE	8.0
The Exorcist	MOVIE	8.1
Monty Python's Flying Circus	SHOW	8.8
Dirty Harry	MOVIE	7.7
My Fair Lady	MOVIE	7.8
The Blue Lagoon	MOVIE	5.8
Bonnie and Clyde	MOVIE	7.7
The Professionals	MOVIE	7.3

Join data

The selection of an appropriate join strategy was a critical component of the data acquisition phase. To ensure the integrity and completeness of the final dataset, the team opted for a Full Outer Join.

This approach was chosen for the following reasons:

- Data Preservation: It ensures that no information is inadvertently lost during the merging process, even if the data is incomplete in one of the source tables.
- Holistic Analysis: It allows for a comprehensive view of the data, enabling the identification of gaps or discrepancies between the merged datasets.

The join combines two complementary datasets: one containing metadata about Netflix titles and another containing IMDb ratings and vote counts. By linking these datasets, structural information such as release year, country, and content type can be analysed together with audience evaluation metrics. This merged dataset forms the foundation for all subsequent analyses presented in this report.

⁷<https://www.kaggle.com/datasets/thedevastator/netflix-imdb-scores>

Table 3: Preview of Joined Data

Title	Country	Duration	Type	IMDb Score
Dick Johnson Is Dead	United States	90 min	MOVIE	7.4
Blood & Water	South Africa	2 Seasons	NA	NA
Ganglands	NA	1 Season	SHOW	7.0
Jailbirds New Orleans	NA	1 Season	SHOW	6.6
Kota Factory	India	2 Seasons	SHOW	9.3
Midnight Mass	NA	1 Season	SHOW	7.7
My Little Pony: A New Gener...	NA	91 min	MOVIE	6.8
Sankofa	United States, Gh...	125 min	MOVIE	7.0
The Great British Baking Show	United Kingdom	9 Seasons	SHOW	8.6
The Starling	United States	104 min	MOVIE	6.3

Data preparation

After merging the datasets, a cleaning step was applied to ensure that the data were consistent and suitable for analysis. Redundant columns (e.g. description.x, description.y) created during the join were identified and removed, and missing values were handled where necessary.

Exploratory Data Analysis

Statistics

Numerical Values

A descriptive statistical analysis was performed on the primary numerical variables to understand the scope and distribution of the Netflix catalog. This summary highlights key metrics across production timelines, content length, and audience reception:

- Temporal Reach: The dataset spans nearly a century of cinema, with content dating back as far as 1925. However, the distribution is heavily skewed toward modern releases, as evidenced by a median release year of 2017 and a third-quartile mark of 2019, reflecting Netflix's rapid library expansion in recent years.
- Content Runtime: The runtime of the available titles varies significantly, ranging from short-form content to epic-length features of up to 235 minutes. With a median runtime of 87 minutes, the library appears well-balanced between episodic TV formats and standard feature films.
- Audience Engagement & Reception: Quality metrics sourced from IMDb reveal a diverse spectrum of critical acclaim. While the average IMDb score sits at a respectable 6.5, the scores range from a low of 1.5 to a near-perfect 9.6.

Table 4: Summary numerical values

Release Year	Runtime	IMDb Score	IMDb Votes
Min. :1925	Min. : 0.0	Min. :1.500	Min. : 5
1st Qu.:2013	1st Qu.: 45.0	1st Qu.:5.800	1st Qu.: 521
Median :2017	Median : 87.0	Median :6.600	Median : 2279
Mean :2014	Mean : 79.2	Mean :6.533	Mean : 23407
3rd Qu.:2019	3rd Qu.:106.0	3rd Qu.:7.400	3rd Qu.: 10144
Max. :2021	Max. :235.0	Max. :9.600	Max. :2268288
NA's :1493	NA's :5060	NA's :5060	NA's :5076

Categorical Values

Complementing the numerical data, the categorical analysis provides a clear picture of the dataset’s structural diversity and its focus on specific audience demographics.

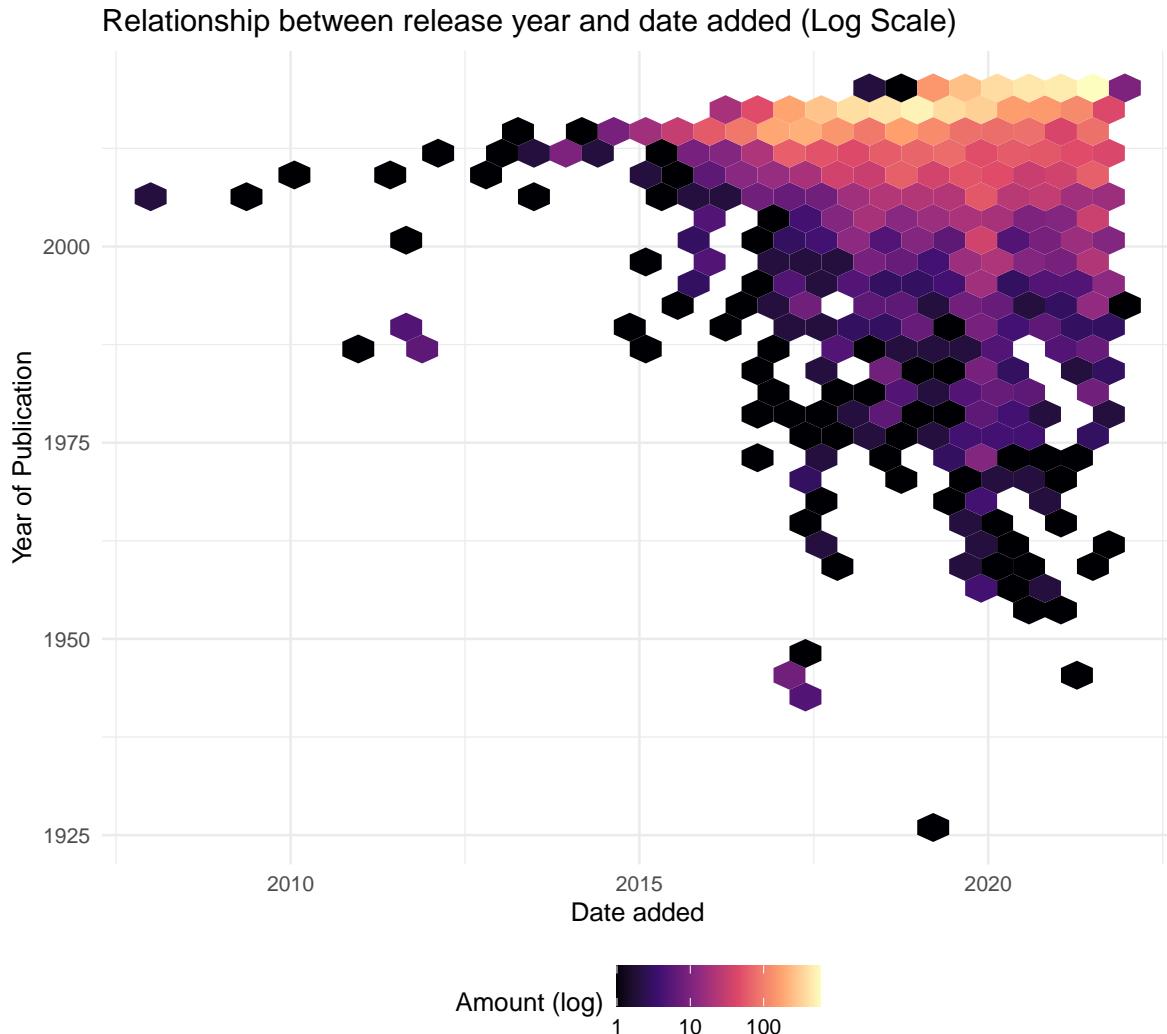
- Content Type Distribution: The library shows a significant inclination toward cinematic content over episodic series. Out of the total categorized entries, 6158 are classified as Movies, while 2692 are identified as TV Shows. This indicates that while Netflix has aggressively expanded its television portfolio, feature films still comprise the majority of its indexed catalog.
- Target Audience and Age Certification: The content is distributed across a wide variety of parental guidelines, reflecting a strategy aimed at diverse age groups.
 - Adult and Mature Content: A substantial portion of the catalog is geared toward mature audiences, with 792 titles rated TV-MA and 548 rated R.
 - Teen and General Audience: Content suitable for older children and teenagers is also prevalent, notably featuring 436 titles with a TV-14 rating and 424 with a PG-13 rating.
 - Family and Children’s Programming: The dataset includes specialized classifications for younger viewers, such as TV-Y (94 titles) and TV-Y7 (104 titles), alongside more general family ratings like PG (238 titles) and G (105 titles).
- Niche Classifications: Smaller segments of the library cater to highly specific regulatory categories, such as the 13 titles rated NC-17 and 72 titles rated TV-G, ensuring a truly global and comprehensive classification coverage.

Table 5: Summary categorical values

Variable	Category	Value
age_certification	G	105
age_certification	NC-17	13
age_certification	PG	238
age_certification	PG-13	424
age_certification	R	548
age_certification	TV-14	436
age_certification	TV-G	72
age_certification	TV-MA	792
age_certification	TV-PG	172
age_certification	TV-Y	94
age_certification	TV-Y7	104
age_certification	NA	7345
type.x	Movie	6158
type.x	TV Show	2692
type.x	NA	1493

Visualizations

How does the relationship between release year and date added reflect Netflix's strategy in balancing newly produced content with the acquisition and digitisation of older titles?



The density plot illustrates the relationship between the year a title was released and the date it was added to Netflix. A strong concentration is visible in the upper-right area of the plot, indicating that many titles added to the platform were released only a few years earlier. This pattern suggests that Netflix places a strong emphasis on acquiring and distributing relatively recent productions.

At the same time, the presence of titles with much older release years shows that the platform also incorporates older films and series into its catalogue. However, these titles appear less

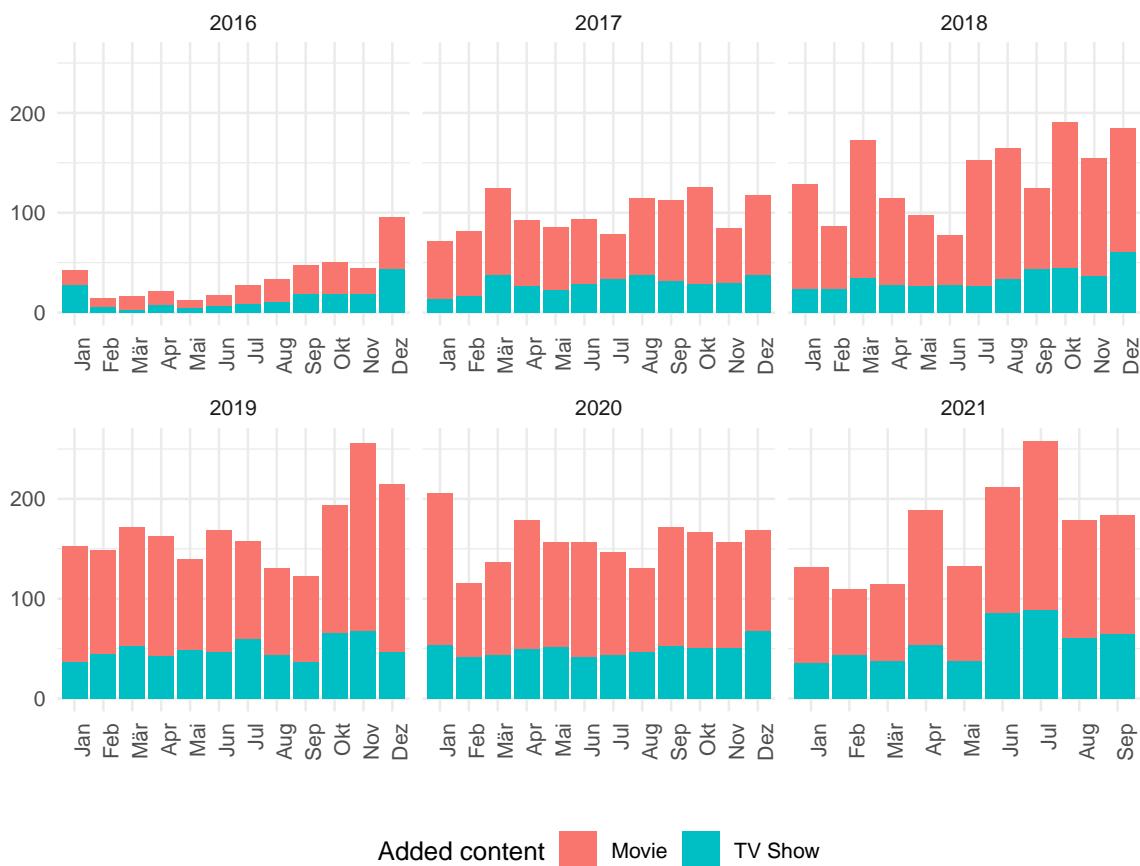
frequently and are more sparsely distributed, indicating that digitisation or acquisition of classic content plays a secondary role compared to the continuous addition of newer material.

Overall, the visualisation suggests that Netflix's content strategy prioritises contemporary titles while selectively enriching its catalogue with older productions, thereby maintaining a balance between current relevance and historical depth.

How has the balance between movies and TV shows evolved on Netflix?

To examine how the relative contribution of movies and TV shows has changed over time, the monthly number of titles added to the platform is visualised separately for each year.

Balance between movies and TV shows (Years 2016 to 2021)



The balance plot illustrates how the number of movies and TV shows added to Netflix has evolved over time, broken down by month and year. Across all years, movies consistently account for a larger share of newly added titles, indicating that films remain a core component of the platform's catalogue.

At the same time, the presence of TV shows increases steadily over the observed period. In several months, especially in later years, the number of added series becomes more substantial, suggesting a growing emphasis on episodic content. This pattern aligns with Netflix's strategic focus on long-form storytelling formats that can encourage sustained viewer engagement and retention.

Overall, the visualisation indicates that while movies continue to dominate in terms of volume, TV shows represent an increasingly important component of the platform's content mix. The evolving balance between these two content types reflects a gradual shift toward a more series-driven catalogue without fully replacing the importance of film-based offerings.

Which countries provide the most content for Netflix, and which genres were produced the most?

In the joined dataset, several variables contain multiple values within a single cell. In particular, the variables *country* and *listed_in* (genre) often include more than one entry, separated by commas. This structure reflects the fact that a single Netflix title can be associated with multiple producing countries and multiple genres. However, such a format is not suitable for aggregation and frequency analysis in its raw form.

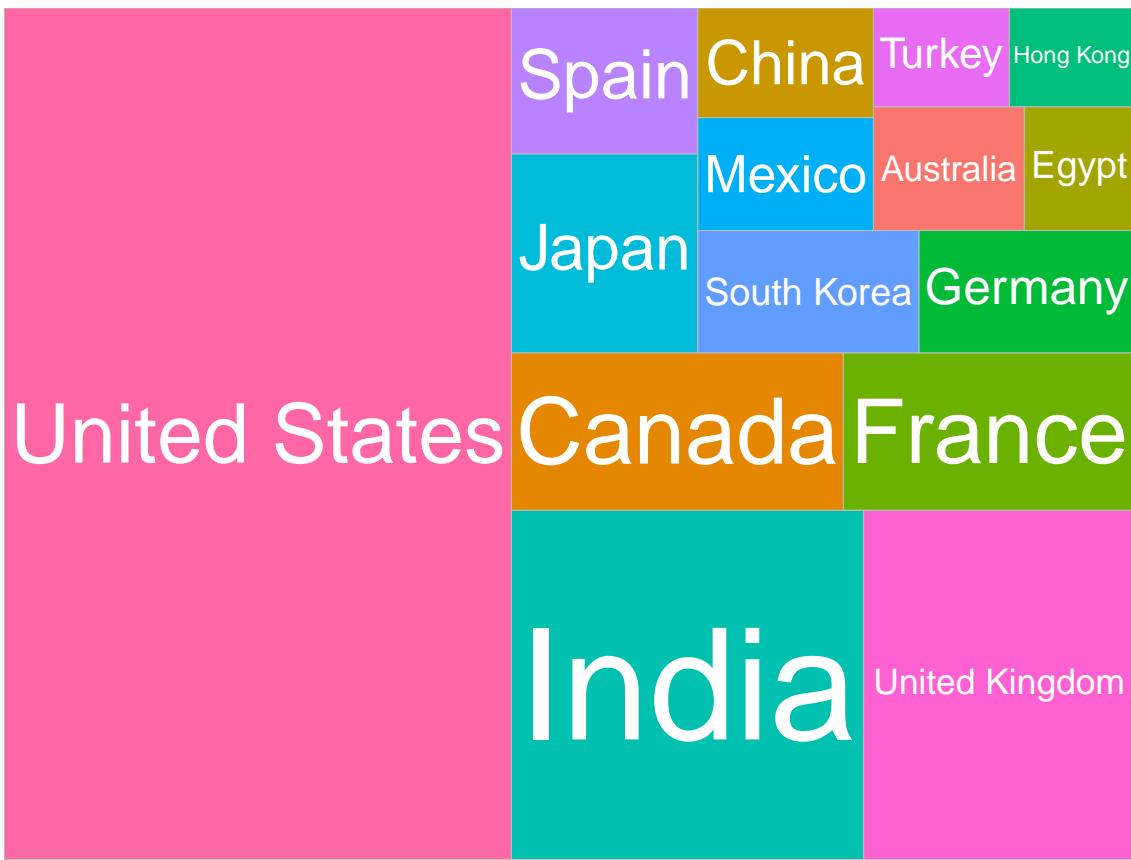
To address this issue, the values in these columns are first separated into individual entries. Each country or genre is extracted and treated as a separate observation. This transformation allows for a more accurate representation of how frequently each country and each genre appears across the Netflix catalogue. After splitting the values, records with missing or empty entries are removed to ensure data quality.

Following this preprocessing step, the data is aggregated by counting the number of occurrences of each country and each genre. To improve readability and focus on the most relevant categories, the analysis is restricted to the top fifteen countries and the top fifteen genres based on their frequency. This approach highlights the dominant contributors while avoiding visual clutter caused by less frequent categories.

The resulting summaries are visualised using treemap plots. In these visualisations, the size of each rectangle represents the relative frequency of a country or genre within the dataset. Treemaps are particularly well suited for this purpose, as they provide an intuitive overview of proportional contributions and allow for easy comparison between categories. These visualisations support an exploratory understanding of the geographical and thematic composition of Netflix's content catalogue.

To visualise the most frequent producing countries and content genres, treemap plots are created. For both variables, the multi-value entries are first expanded so that each country or genre appears as a separate observation. The data is then aggregated by counting the frequency of each category, and the analysis is restricted to the top 15 entries to ensure readability of the visualisations.

Country with the largest contribution



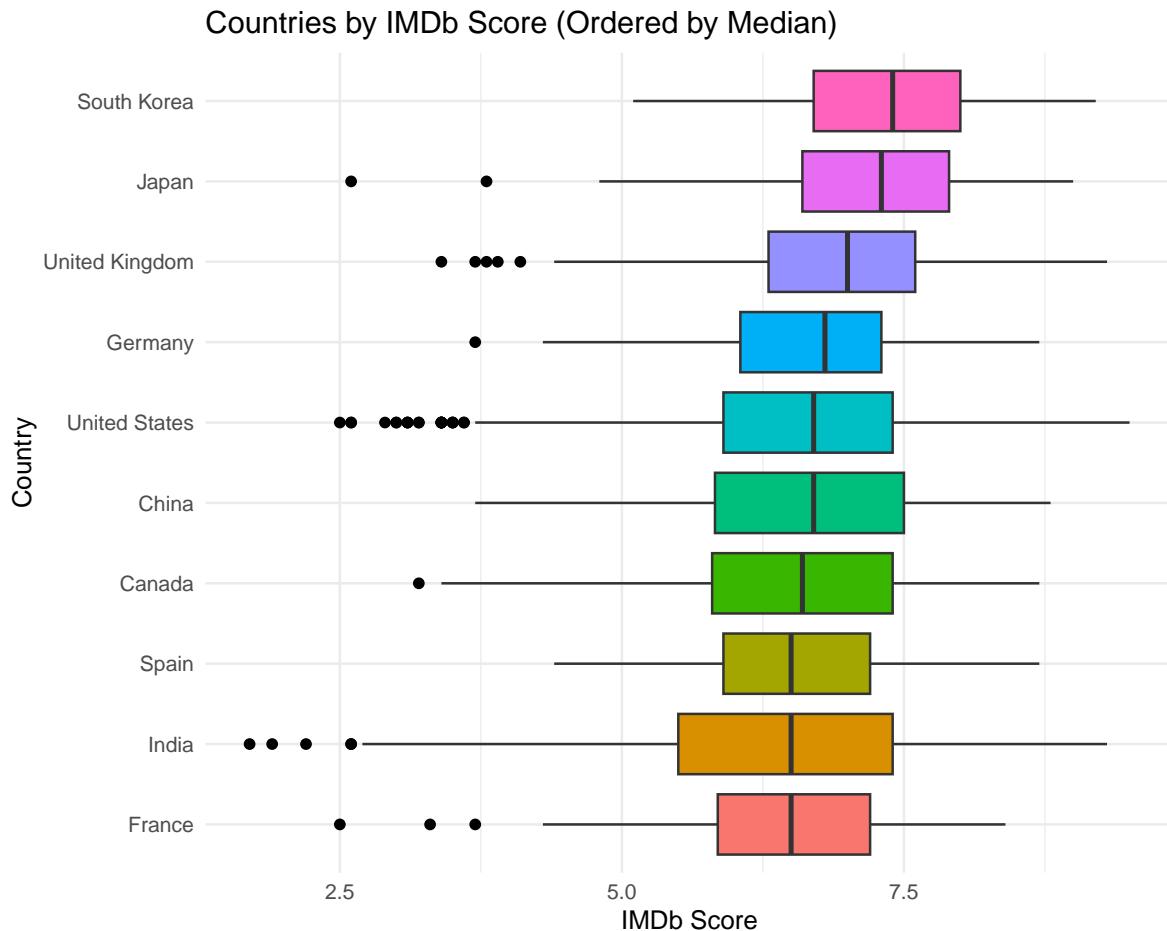
The country treemap suggests that Netflix content production is concentrated in a small number of countries. A few countries occupy the largest areas in the visualisation, indicating that they contribute a substantial share of the titles in the dataset. At the same time, the presence of many smaller rectangles highlights the involvement of a wide range of additional countries, each contributing a smaller number of titles. This pattern reflects a combination of dominant production markets and broader international diversity within Netflix's catalogue.

Genres with the most content contributions



The genre treemap indicates that a limited number of genres account for a large proportion of Netflix's content catalogue. These dominant genres form the core of the platform's offering, while numerous other genres appear less frequently. The distribution suggests that Netflix combines widely popular genres with a variety of more specialised categories, contributing to thematic diversity across the catalogue.

How are IMDb scores distributed across countries and genres?

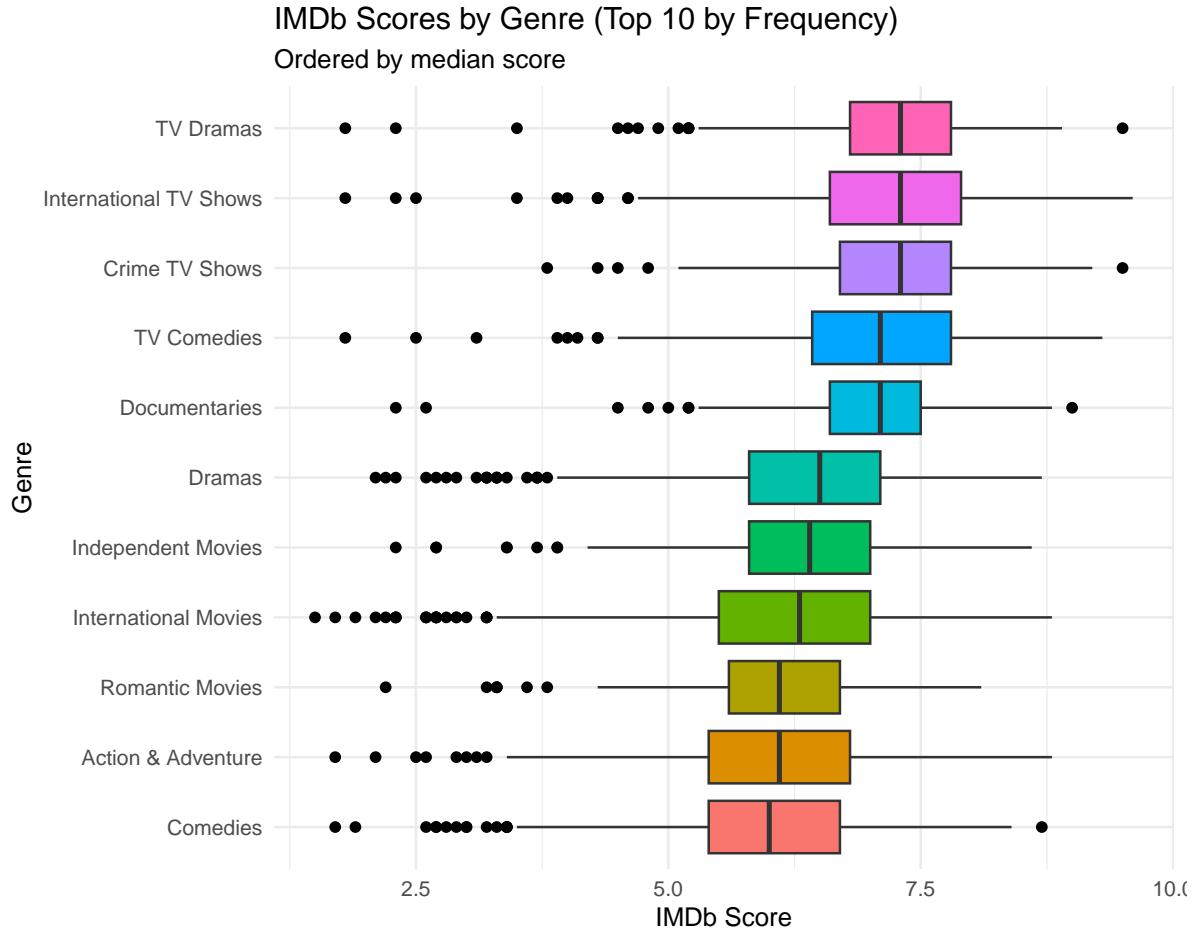


The boxplot illustrates the distribution of IMDb scores across the ten countries that contribute the largest number of titles to the dataset. Rather than focusing on single high-scoring productions, the visualisation highlights the overall quality distribution within each country's output.

The results show that most countries have a relatively similar central tendency, with median scores generally concentrated in the mid-range around 6 to 7. This suggests that perceived content quality does not vary drastically between the major production countries represented on Netflix. At the same time, the spread of the boxplots indicates that each country produces both highly rated and more moderately rated titles.

Some countries display wider variability, which may reflect a broader diversity of genres and production styles. Overall, the figure suggests that Netflix's major content-producing countries

contribute comparably in terms of average audience reception, with differences appearing more in variability than in central quality levels.



This visualisation compares the distribution of IMDb scores across the ten most frequent content genres on Netflix. By examining the median, spread, and outliers of each genre, the plot provides insight into how audience evaluations differ depending on thematic category.

The results indicate that certain genres tend to achieve consistently higher audience ratings, while others show greater variation. In particular, documentary and drama-related categories often exhibit higher median scores, suggesting stronger audience appreciation and perceived quality. In contrast, more entertainment-focused genres such as comedies and action-oriented content show a broader distribution of ratings, reflecting a mix of both highly successful and more average productions.

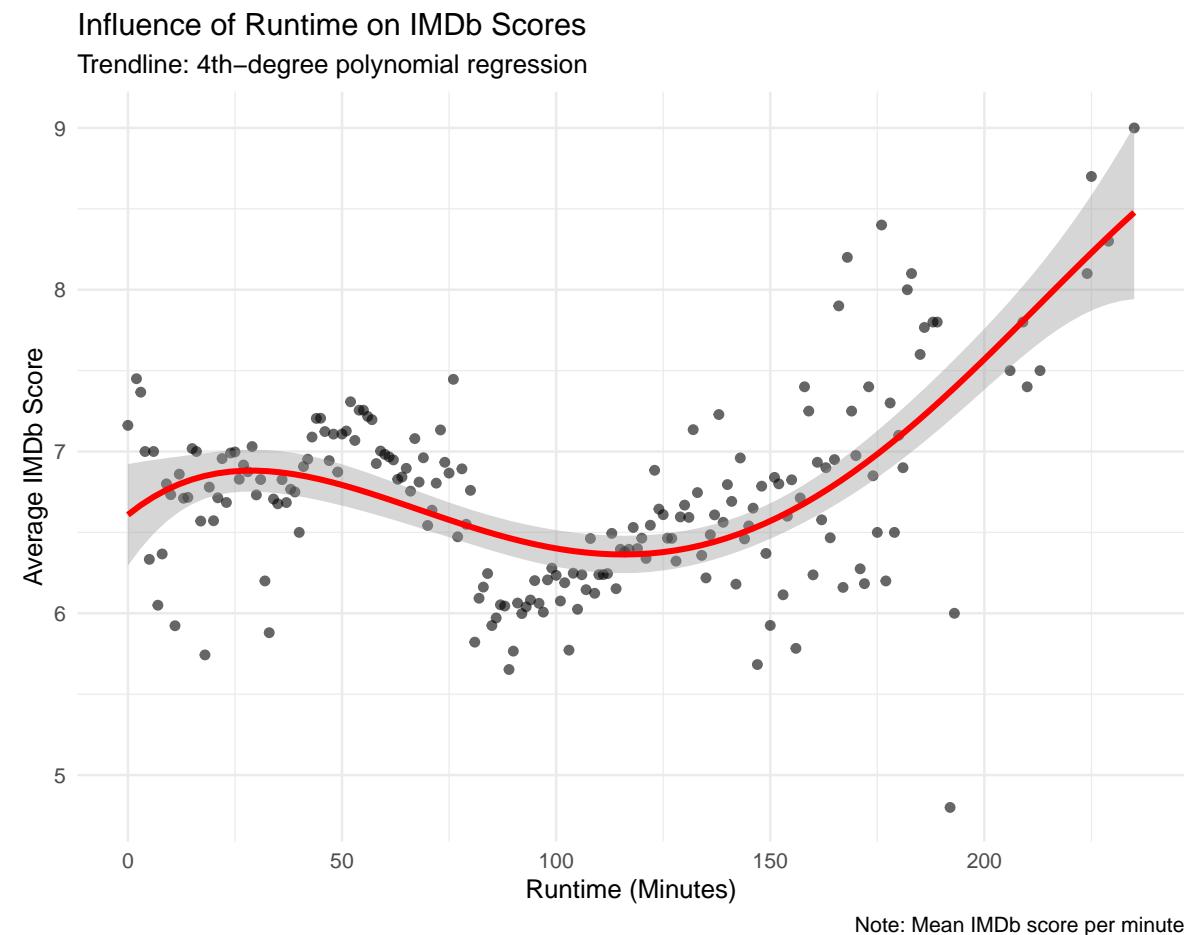
Overall, the distribution suggests that genre plays an important role in shaping audience perception. While no single genre dominates completely, some categories appear more consis-

tently associated with higher evaluation scores, indicating differences in how viewers respond to different types of storytelling.

Forecasting Content Quality Based on Runtime

This chapter presents an additional exploratory analysis that was not part of the core course content. While the main sections of the report focus on descriptive insights into Netflix's catalogue, this section introduces a simple predictive modelling approach.

The goal of this analysis is to explore whether structural characteristics of a title (in this case runtime) are associated with differences in audience evaluation, measured by IMDb score. Although this does not represent a formal forecasting model, it provides an example of how regression techniques can be used to identify potential trends and relationships within the dataset.



The forecasting model explores the relationship between runtime and average IMDb score by fitting a smoothed polynomial trend line to the observed data. The scatterplot shows individual titles, while the fitted curve highlights the general pattern across different runtime lengths.

The results suggest a non-linear relationship between runtime and perceived quality. Titles with very short or moderate runtimes tend to cluster around mid-range scores, while longer productions show a gradual increase in average ratings. This pattern may indicate that longer formats, which often allow for more complex storytelling and character development, are associated with slightly higher audience appreciation.

At the same time, the wide dispersion of points demonstrates that runtime alone is not a strong predictor of quality. High- and low-rated titles exist across nearly all runtime ranges. The model therefore provides an exploratory indication of a potential trend rather than a causal relationship, highlighting how runtime may be linked to audience perception without determining it directly.

Chapter of Choice: Country Similarity Network Based on Genre Profiles

This chapter presents an additional exploratory analysis that extends beyond the methods covered in the core course. Instead of analysing countries independently, the goal of this section is to explore similarities between countries based on the genre composition of the titles they contribute to Netflix's catalogue.

To achieve this, a network analysis approach was applied using the `igraph` package in R. Network analysis allows complex relationships to be represented visually through nodes and connections. In this context, each node represents a country, while connections indicate countries that share similar genre distributions.

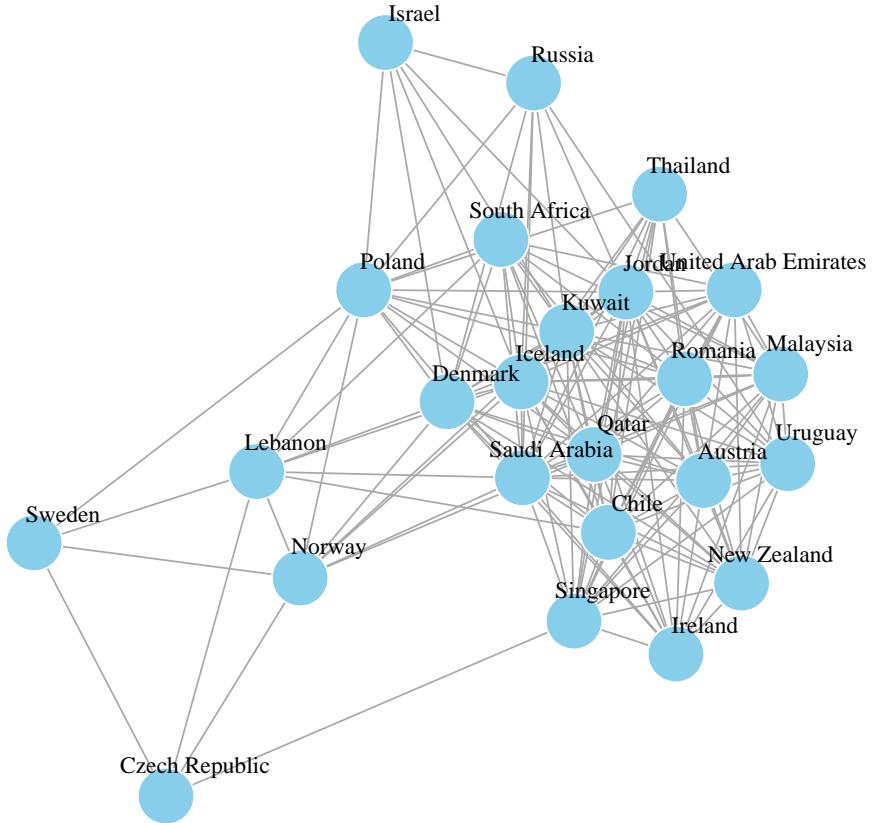
The analysis was conducted in several steps. First, titles containing multiple countries and genres were expanded into individual observations to ensure that all relationships were captured correctly. The data were then aggregated to create a country–genre matrix describing how frequently each genre appeared per country. Based on this matrix, distances between countries were calculated using Euclidean distance after standardising the data. Countries showing strong similarity were connected using a threshold-based adjacency matrix, resulting in a network structure that highlights relational patterns rather than simple rankings.

The resulting network visualisation reveals clusters of countries that share comparable genre profiles. Countries with many connections suggest broader similarities with others, while more peripheral countries indicate unique or specialised genre compositions. This perspective complements earlier analyses by shifting the focus from individual country rankings toward relational structures within the global Netflix catalogue.

It is important to note that the network reflects similarity based solely on genre distribution and does not capture factors such as production budgets, audience behaviour, or co-production

dynamics. Nevertheless, the analysis demonstrates how network-based methods can provide additional insight into structural patterns within media datasets and offers a new exploratory perspective on Netflix's international content landscape.

Cultural network: Country similarity by genre



The network visualisation highlights similarities between countries based on their genre distributions. Countries that are closely connected share comparable genre profiles, indicating similar content composition within the Netflix catalogue.

Clusters of countries suggest groups with related genre patterns, while more isolated countries represent more distinctive or specialised genre structures. Overall, this network perspective

complements the previous analyses by revealing relational patterns between countries rather than focusing only on individual rankings.

Discussion

The analyses presented in this study provide a descriptive overview of how Netflix's content catalogue has evolved over time, highlighting patterns in content acquisition, composition, geographical distribution, and audience perception. Taken together, the findings suggest that Netflix follows a strategy that balances the continuous addition of recent productions with selective inclusion of older titles, while simultaneously expanding its global and thematic reach.

The relationship between release year and date added indicates that Netflix prioritises contemporary content, with many titles appearing on the platform shortly after their original release. This pattern reflects the importance of keeping the catalogue current and competitive in a fast-moving streaming market. At the same time, the presence of older films and series suggests that Netflix also invests in maintaining catalogue depth by preserving access to classics and historically significant content.

The balance analysis between movies and TV shows reveals that films continue to dominate in terms of overall volume. However, the steady growth in the number of TV shows added over time points toward an increasing strategic emphasis on episodic formats. Series-based content often encourages longer viewing sessions and sustained platform engagement, which may explain the gradual shift toward a more series-driven catalogue without fully replacing film-based offerings.

The geographical and genre analyses further highlight the platform's global scope. A relatively small number of countries contribute a large share of the available content, reflecting the dominance of established production markets. At the same time, the presence of many smaller contributors indicates increasing international diversification. Similarly, a limited number of genres account for a large proportion of titles, suggesting a focus on widely appealing content while still maintaining thematic diversity.

Audience evaluation patterns, as reflected in IMDb scores, show that perceived content quality is relatively consistent across major production countries. Differences appear more in variability than in average rating levels, suggesting that strong and weaker titles are produced across all regions. Genre, however, appears to play a more noticeable role, with documentary and drama-related content often receiving slightly higher evaluations than more entertainment-focused categories.

The exploratory modelling in the Chapter of Choice provides an additional perspective by examining the relationship between runtime and audience perception. While a weak non-linear trend is visible, the results confirm that runtime alone is not a decisive factor in determining perceived quality. This reinforces the broader observation that audience reception is influenced by multiple interacting factors rather than a single structural characteristic.

Overall, the findings should be interpreted with caution. The analysis is based on publicly available metadata and IMDb ratings, which represent only partial indicators of content success and audience engagement. Factors such as production budgets, marketing strategies, recommendation algorithms, and actual viewing behaviour are not captured in the dataset but likely play a significant role in shaping the platform's content strategy and reception.

Despite these limitations, the study provides a coherent picture of how Netflix curates its catalogue to remain both current and diverse. By combining recent productions with selected older titles, balancing movies and series, and expanding internationally across countries and genres, Netflix appears to pursue a content strategy that aims to maximise reach, engagement, and long-term relevance.

Conclusion

This project explored the evolution of Netflix's content catalogue using a data-driven and exploratory approach. By combining metadata on titles with IMDb audience evaluation metrics, the analysis aimed to identify structural patterns in content growth, composition, geographical diversity, and perceived quality.

The results suggest that Netflix places a strong emphasis on recently produced content while still incorporating older titles to enrich its catalogue. The relationship between release year and date added indicates that the platform prioritises contemporary productions, while selectively maintaining access to classic films and series. This reflects a strategy that balances relevance with catalogue depth.

The analysis of content composition shows that movies continue to dominate the platform in terms of volume. However, TV shows have become increasingly important over time, supporting the idea that episodic content plays a key role in encouraging longer viewer engagement and retention.

Geographical and thematic analyses reveal that Netflix's catalogue is shaped by a relatively small number of dominant production countries and popular genres, while still maintaining diversity through contributions from many smaller markets. The distribution of IMDb scores across countries and genres suggests that perceived content quality is relatively consistent across major production regions, with differences appearing more in variability than in average rating levels.

The additional "Chapter of Choice" introduced an exploratory modelling approach to examine the relationship between runtime and audience evaluation. The results indicate a weak non-linear association, where longer productions tend to receive slightly higher ratings on average. However, the wide dispersion of scores across all runtime ranges suggests that runtime alone is not a strong predictor of perceived quality.

It is important to note that this study is descriptive and exploratory in nature. The analyses are based on available metadata and IMDb metrics, which serve as proxies for quality and

audience engagement but do not capture all aspects of viewer behaviour. Furthermore, the models used in this project do not aim to establish causal relationships.

Future work could extend this analysis by incorporating additional variables such as production budgets, viewer statistics, or recommendation system data. More advanced predictive modelling techniques could also be applied to better understand the factors influencing audience reception.

Overall, this project provides a structured overview of how Netflix's content catalogue has evolved over time and offers insights into the platform's content strategy, diversity, and audience perception.

Project Information

Use of Generative AI

During this project, generative AI tools such as ChatGPT were used to support coding, debugging, and structuring the report. AI was particularly helpful for explaining R functions, suggesting visualisation ideas, and improving the clarity of written interpretations.

To ensure correctness, all suggested code was tested and validated within R. Outputs were checked manually and compared with expected results. In some cases, AI suggestions needed adaptation to fit the structure of the dataset or project goals.

Overall, AI served as a learning assistant rather than a replacement for understanding. It helped accelerate problem solving and improved documentation quality, while all analytical decisions remained under the control of the project team.

Team Roles & Contributions

In this project, Faranak Rahimi & Nils Rechberger operated as a balanced leadership duo, each contributing equally to the final outcome through complementary roles. Nils Rechberger served as the Tech Lead, steering the technical roadmap and managing the overall project flow to ensure all milestones were met on schedule. Parallel to this, Faranak Rahimi focused on Code Quality and Strategic Alignment, overseeing the code review process and performing continuous gap analyses to ensure the project's "as-is" state perfectly matched its intended "to-be" objectives. Together, their combined efforts ensured a high-quality delivery where management and technical integrity were given equal weight.