

Everyone wants to sell downloadable movies. Which is a good thing. Laptop travellers and PDA folks who like to watch movies wherever they happen to be will certainly benefit. Downloadable movies are also a way to kill time in the office. Its easier than picking up a book between phone calls.

The biggest business impact of downloadable movies wont be on the movie business, it will be on the paperback book business. But thats a post for another day.

This is a post to let you know about the 1 THING about downloadable movies that the prognosticators who think downloadable movies will replace or severely impact that retail sales business and to a lesser extent the rental movie business are missing.

The 1 Thing is that you can only download 1 Thing at a time. Sure, technically you could open multiple windows. Sure, you could also go to Moms computer and hope the DRM on the movie allows you to move it to the PC or device you want it on. But the sobering reality is this. You can only download 1 PC at a time.

Which means, there ain't ever going to be a "Christmas Download". There is never going to be a card under the PC saying "I just downloaded you 3 of your favorite movies". Its not that it couldnt happen technically. Its the equivalent of saying "I just tied up my PC for 3 frickin nights to do this for you, it aint worth it". Its also the equivalent of saying "I downloaded these movies, and you already know it because you were complaining about the speed of the broadband connection to the house while it was happening".

Easier to download a movie ? Maybe. Easier to download 2 or 3 movies than going to the store to buy or rent ? Never. Never, ever, ever. (Which means not in the next 5 years).

The important business lesson for movie marketers is to make sure there is absolutely no confusion this Christmas or the next many Christmases that downloading a movie is an option to buying the store. **YOU WILL KILL YOUR BUSINESS.** You will upset customers. Upset retailers, and sell fewer movies. Thats usually not a good business opportunity.

I think most consumers will figure it out quickly that the hassle factor isnt worth it for buying movies for other people or more than 1 movie for yourself.. But I can assure you , smart studios will be all over making sure that retail is and remains the primary outlet and that movie downloads over the net is a niche business and nothing more for a long time to come

Downloading movies is a decent business for an aggregator. They have to be there. THere is some money to be made selling for laptops and PDAs. Downloading as a retail alternative aint gonna work