**Module 4: Critical Thinking Assignment**

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**Introduction**

In the highly competitive world of digital streaming services, companies constantly seek strategies to increase viewership and profitability while retaining subscribers. The massive growth in streaming consumption over the past decade has intensified the need for platforms to understand what drives audience engagement and revenue. This Capstone Project uses quantitative research to investigate key aspects like the impact of content type, release schedule strategies, and the influence of viewer ratings and online popularity on engagement and profit. Using predictive analytics, this project will help provide data driven recommendations for decision makers within the streaming industry.

The results of this Capstone Project aim to provide actionable insights for streaming platforms that face increasing competition and evolving audience expectations. Understanding which types of content, release patterns, and viewer feedback mechanisms drive profitability, and sustained engagement will help platforms optimize their content strategies and improve their competitive positioning in the market. The platforms need a boost, as Alex Weprin, a journalist with the Hollywood Reporter, noted in his 2023 article:

“Netflix now finds itself atop the subscription streaming heap, ending 2022 with 231 million paid subscribers and $5.6 billion in profits. […] The rest of the industry, meanwhile, is looking at 2024. That’s when Disney, NBCU, Paramount and WBD all say they expect — or at least hope — to swing to a profit in their streaming businesses.” (Weprin, 2023).

While Netflix is very profitable, almost all other streaming platforms have not even gotten out of the red. For them to continue to produce and hopefully one day see success, it is important to determine the factors that have helped profitable companies like Netflix get there.

I will gather references and conduct analysis to determine which hypotheses to support/reject and answers to my research questions. I have already found multiple sources that will help me find the answers I am looking for. I have gathered articles that report streaming platform profits, statistics that detail viewer and critic ratings, and more to help with this process.

**Literature Review Process**

My process for writing the literature review has focused on gathering a wide range of credible sources to support my topic and problem statements. I have primarily been using the CSU Global Library to search for scholarly articles and industry reports. I use keywords to search like “Streaming Services,” “Customer Churn,” “Streaming Profits,” or “Streaming Services Original Content.” One strategy that has been especially helpful is looking through the bibliographies of the articles/journals that I find. This often leads me to additional relevant sources I might not have come across through keyword searches alone, and it helps me understand how researchers have built on each other’s work overtime.

One challenge I’ve faced is that some articles focus heavily on streaming platforms that are not used in the United States or rely on outdated data, which does not always directly address the factors leading to higher profits today. Because of this, I have had to piece together information from different perspectives and sources to build a clear connection to my topic and make sure my literature review stays relevant. To narrow my focus, I also sometimes include specific streaming platforms in my searches, like Netflix, Hulu, or Disney+, to find articles that discuss their profit trends, original content strategies, and subscriber behaviors in more detail.

Overall, staying organized, taking careful notes, and using the reference lists of strong sources have really helped strengthen my literature review and ensure that I’m covering my topic from multiple angles.

**Research Questions**

To guide this investigation, I developed the following research questions:

1. What types of content are associated with higher profitability and increased viewership on streaming platforms?
2. Are there identifiable patterns in release schedules that correlate with sustained platform success?
3. Do viewer ratings or online popularity metrics significantly influence user engagement and profits on streaming platforms?

These questions aim to address both the operational and strategic challenges faced by streaming services that are investing heavily in content production and licensing. Understanding these factors can help platforms refine their content acquisition strategies, scheduling decisions, and interface design to better meet viewer expectations.

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