

## Audience Generations: Millennials, “Becomers,” and Beyond (Part 1)

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Over the past year Turner Classic Movies (TCM), a subsidiary network of Turner Broadcasting, in conjunction with the Criterion Collection has changed the television ecosystem with its newest endeavor; FilmStruck. Set to launch this fall, FilmStruck is the first direct to consumer video service that features a comprehensive library of films from various independent studios that cover a wide array of genres including arthouse, foreign, and cult films. As the television landscape has shifted in recent years, many networks have added a digital supplement to their linear programming. TCM is the first of any Turner property to launch a separate direct to consumer platform in addition to its already existing digital supplement (that being WatchTCM). What is interesting about TCM releasing this newest platform is the audience it is speaking to. TCM has a traditionally older generational audience yet this new streaming service, which is available on popular providers like Roku or Amazon Fire, speaks to a younger audience familiar with streaming culture. It is through this new platform that TCM has the opportunity to breathe new air into the network and the overall brand of Turner Classic Movies. In a recent press release by Turner CEO John Martin, he states that "FilmStruck is a terrific example of our strategy to meet consumer demand for great content across all screens. It's tailor-made for the diehard movie enthusiast who craves a deep, intimate experience with independent, foreign, and art house films. And it takes advantage of TCM's powerful curation capabilities, as well as its proven track record in building a long-term relationship with passionate film fans." It is this long-term relationship that Martin speaks of that TCM programmers must direct their attention to. On top of organizing themes, they must actively be aware of the already standing reputation of the network and the relationships that have formed with its traditionally older audience.

On the linear network, the programming department curates already existing content; designing themes that best highlight the available licensed programming offered at a given time. The same rules apply to FilmStruck, but the movies themselves have a more contemporary feel to them; targeting the younger impassioned cinephile generation. Although the service readily engages its already established audience, it now has a larger outlet to engage with younger audiences who are digitally active. With FilmStruck, there are fewer limitations on what can be shown since the platform does not have to adhere to the standards and practices placed on traditional television networks. It is through this lack of limitation that FilmStruck has the ability to redefine what a classic film is for a younger audience while again being mindful of the relationship already formed with its older audience. I argue that the FilmStruck curators must operate like traditional television producers in their programming strategies in order to shape the form in which “classic” films are being shared amongst generational audiences and to eventually redefine the meaning of the word “classic.” Because of the sizable library available through FilmStruck, audiences receive a wider range of “classic” films from all over the world. The service is not limited by ratings or licensing rights; it is free to showcase just about anything. By having this freedom that the linear network is not afforded, well established fans of TCM can explore what has been previously unavailable to them via the platform while those new to Turner Classic Movies can get their first experience with classic film. This exploration of film through the platform will ideally bring younger audiences to the traditional linear network, thus creating

a symbiotic relationship between the platform and the network as well as the varying generational audiences.