

Predict Content Performance with New Behavioral Insights

*Data Driven Strategies to Surface the Right
Content for the Right Audience at the Right Price*

eBook | Whip Media

November 2021

Why It Matters:

- With the influx of streaming services and rising licensing costs, finding and acquiring content for your audiences - whether it's from inside or outside your borders - at the right price, is critical to driving service differentiation and retention while meeting ROI thresholds.
- Integrating behavioral insights on how audiences anticipate and engage with content are likely to trigger new and better licensing deals that may not have been previously considered.
- The ever-changing licensing world requires a transformational online marketplace enriched with proprietary predictive insights to enable Buyers and Sellers to work more efficiently and make smarter deals.

Introduction

The global explosion of new services has caused a seismic shift in how consumers view content and how platforms program titles. According to Statista, as of March 2021, the U.S. has seen about a 48% uptick in subscription video-on-demand (SVOD) services so far. Other countries are closely seeing the same SVOD penetration with Sweden at approximately 40%, Canada (37%), Norway (36%) and the U.K. (35%). Looking south, Argentina has accounted for 48 streaming platforms, while Brazil and Mexico counted for 47 and 42 SVOD services.

With the influx of these new streaming services and the global expansion of others, matching content supply and demand has become complex and costs have risen dramatically. Exacerbating the situation are production delays, changing release windows, and traditional providers of licensed content such as major studios and broadcast/cable networks, reserving content for their own service.

These and other factors pose challenges for distributors to find and acquire content at a cost that will yield acceptable ROI thresholds. Now more than ever, success requires content acquisition strategies to evolve, where data driven decisions and consumer insights serve to pinpoint the right content for the right audience at the right price.



Going Beyond Content Borders

Anticipation Triggers Early Indicator of Success

It wasn't too long ago that content consumption was primarily driven by US-produced blockbuster movies or TV series and the occasional out-of-region produced breakout title. However, the last five years have opened new doors to content, and consumers are experiencing shows or films that they would have normally missed. The most recent examples are Spain's *Money Heist*, France's *Lupin* and Korea's *Squid Game*.

While it's tempting to fall into post confirmation bias - "we knew it would be a hit" - the real question is how to identify early indicators of content performance. The answer may lie in observing engagement behavior. Traditional viewership metrics look backwards, whereas insights on anticipation, and other qualitative datasets look forward. At Whip Media, we capture rich insights from proprietary data gathered from the 19M global content enthusiasts of our TV Time app, the world's largest tracking platform for TV and movies.

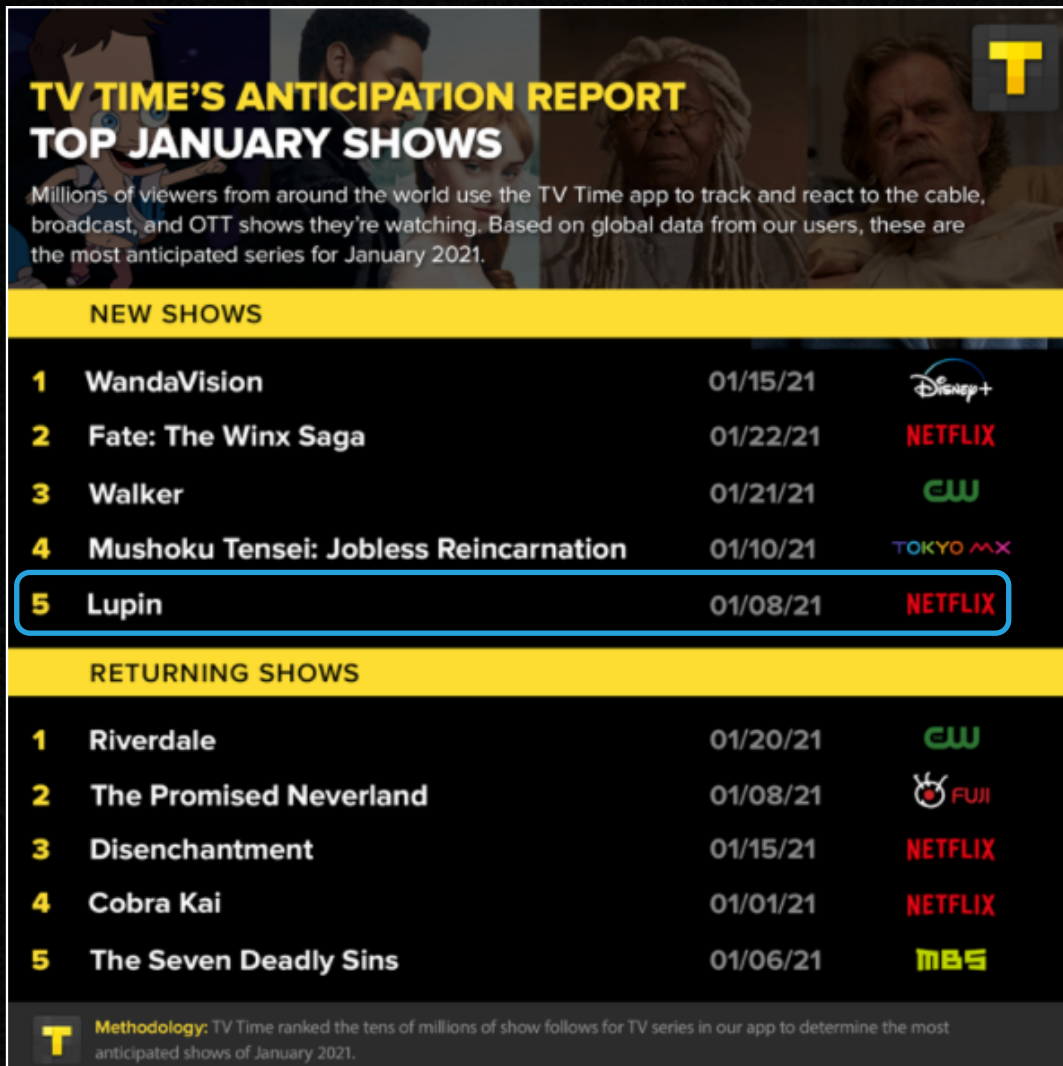
For France's *Lupin*, Whip Media surfaced trends that audiences were highly anticipating the series before its debut. Having an existing fanbase doesn't mean that a title or series will be a success. Rather, that insight comes from the relative ranking of a title or series compared to others and whether anticipation converts to actual viewership.

Prior to its debut in January, 2021, *Lupin* was ranked in the top 5 for most anticipated shows among all new upcoming shows on a global basis. If you were a platform looking to license content, this early indicator anticipation data could be used to identify content that is similar in nature. Or you could model the relationship that this title/genre has to your audiences to inform deals in the works. And do so before the competition.



Lupin is One of the Most Anticipated Shows Ahead of Debut

(Published in December 2020 Looking Ahead to January 2021)



As we previously mentioned, conversion from anticipation to viewership is the industry standard for success. *Lupin's* debut weekend insights yielded strong viewership in key global markets. In Europe, where a larger fanbase and awareness existed for the title, *Lupin* became a top viewed show overnight. In the U.S. market, American viewers eventually latched on to *Lupin* after the post-debut international traction and buzz. As a content buyer, anticipation for a particular title ahead of debut could inform licensing decisions for similar titles or genres that could potentially be a good market fit.

Lupin is One of the Most Viewed Shows in Key Global Markets its Debut Weekend

(TV Time Data, January 8-10, 2021)

Rankings based on viewshare within market

	FRANCE	ITALY	SPAIN	GERMANY	UK
1	Lupin	Lupin	The One That Looms	Brooklyn Nine-Nine	Cobra Kai
2	Bridgerton	Bridgerton	Lupin	How To Get Away With Murder	Bridgerton
3	Chilling Adventures of Sabrina	Chilling Adventures of Sabrina	Cobra Kai	Lupin	Chilling Adventures of Sabrina
4	One Piece	Grey's Anatomy	Bridgerton	Bridgerton	The Office (US)
5	Vikings	Friends	Chilling Adventures of Sabrina	Chilling Adventures of Sabrina	Star Trek: Discovery
6	Attack on Titan	Master Chef (IT)	30 Coins	Grey's Anatomy	Modern Family
7	My Hero Academia	Convent Mysteries	Vikings	Vikings	Grey's Anatomy
8	Here It All Begins	Brooklyn Nine-Nine	The Mandalorian	Star Trek: Discovery	RuPaul's Drag Race
9	Grey's Anatomy	The Office (US)	Grey's Anatomy	Big Bang Theory	Schitt's Creek
10	Naruto Shippuden	How I Met Your Mother	The Office (US)	The Walking Dead	Lupin

Predicting Success of Squid Game Within First Days of Debut

For Korea's *Squid Game*, which was released 17 September 2021, Whip Media's proprietary data insights indicated that it would be a hit within days of debut and weeks before Netflix announced that it had become the most streamed show of all time on Netflix (111 million fans in 80 countries announced on 12 October 2021). For a title that had no previous IP to provide a built-in fan base and one that, like many Netflix Originals, dropped with very minimal marketing, it can be challenging to pick-up on early signals of success. Whip Media's behavioral insights can identify content trends in real-time and as they happen.

One way that Whip Media's behavior dataset uniquely measures the growth trajectory of a title is via tracking "Followers"; those individuals who intend to view a show. Users of the TV Time app add a title to their watch list, which allows us to measure this direct expression of intent. This offers a clear growth trend that can be benchmarked and analyzed by various demographic factors. When Whip Media tracked the Follower growth trajectory relative to other Netflix Originals hits, we identified within days that *Squid Game*, in fact, was growing faster than any other series out of the gate. In the first 7 days, Followers grew 981% for *Squid Game*. The closest second place hit was *The Queen's Gambit* at 798%. Subsequent public announcements by Netflix confirmed early observations.

Comparison of Follower Growth Rates Among Netflix Originals

Within 7 days of release, *Squid Game* was trending to be the biggest debut show in Netflix history

TITLE	RELEASE DATE	GROWTH RATE FIRST 7 DAYS
Squid Game	09/17/2021	981%
The Queen's Gambit	10/23/2020	798%
Lupin	01/08/2021	620%
Sex / Life	06/25/2021	588%
Bridgerton	12/25/2020	376%
The Witcher	12/20/2019	82%

While both *Squid Game* and *Lupin* first aired on Netflix, Spain's *La Casa de Papel*, also known as *Money Heist*, originally premiered on the Spanish station Antena 3 in 2017. After a first season of decent ratings, the second season didn't resonate with audiences as strongly. However, Netflix was gaining interest in the show and eventually licensed the rights for the existing and following seasons. After some cutting and dubbing, Netflix premiered the series in 2018. The show quickly took on a life of its own -- becoming the most-watched non-English language program on the platform at the time.

These examples demonstrate that there is an appetite for content that extends beyond originating territories. Behavioral observations can inform the content acquisition strategy by providing early indicators on viewer engagement, thereby enabling distributors to get a head start in identifying potential breakouts or negotiating whether to pass or renew licensing agreements.

With streamers and networks looking to strike gold with the next big piece of content for their audiences, data is needed to make these powerful licensing decisions and discover new hit shows through content affinity.

Case Study: Finding the Next Big Global Hit

Local content that could potentially have wide global appeal has been difficult to spot. Media and entertainment organizations are quickly recognizing that in order to navigate today's competitive landscape they need more granular insights -- not just on their content libraries, but on their consumers as well.

In a recent case study, Whip Media leveraged consumer insights from its TV Time app to examine the Middle Eastern and North Africa (MENA) region as an untapped market for up-and-coming content that could potentially be ripe for acquisition. To identify fresh content, the study focused on top-performing local titles that premiered within the first half of 2021 and took into account title Follower count -- an intent to view measurement based on users of the TV Time app adding a title to their "watch list." Global SVOD originals were ruled out so that the focus could remain on truly local titles.

After aggregating this data as of July 2021, a crime drama mini-series titled *Rashash* from Saudi Arabia surfaced to the top. This show, inspired by real events surrounding a notorious criminal in the 1980s, is currently available only on the Shahid VIP streaming service in the MENA region.

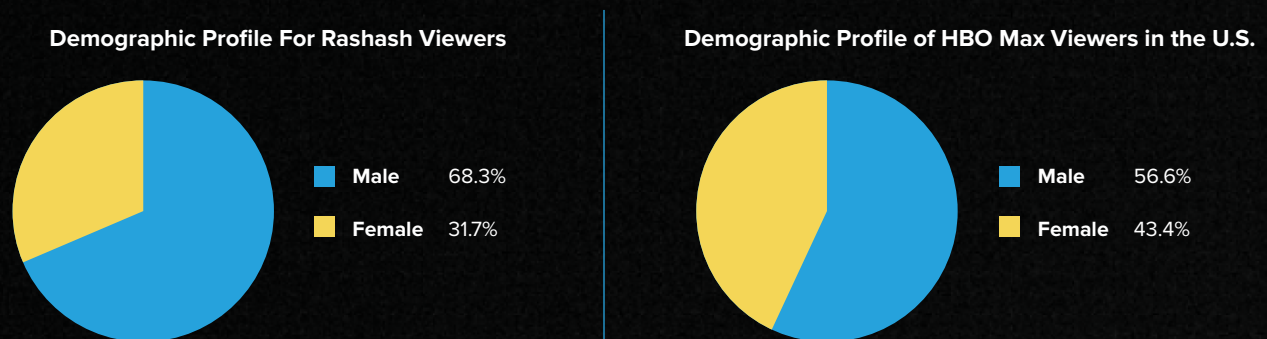
Comparison of Followers for MENA Local Shows

(As of July 2021)


Title	Originating Network	Originating Country	Language	Genre	First Release Date	TV Time Followers
Rashash	Shahid (UAE)	Saudi Arabia	Arabic	[Action] [Crime] [Drama] [Mini-Series]	7/2/21	4,097
2020	Shahid (UAE)	Lebanon	Arabic	[Crime] [Drama] [Romance]	4/13/21	2,262
Newton's	DMC	Egypt	Arabic	[Drama]	4/13/21	2,141
Nasl El Aghrab	Shahid (UAE)	Egypt	Arabic	[Action] [Drama] [Thriller]	4/13/21	1,694
Take Care of	Shahid (UAE)	Egypt	English	[Comedy] [Drama]	4/11/21	1,495
Just Amina	Shahid (UAE)	Kuwait	Arabic	[Comedy] [Drama]	4/13/21	1,047
Seen	MBC 1	Saudi Arabia	Arabic	[Documentary] [Reality]	4/13/21	984
COVID-25	Shahid (UAE)	Egypt	Arabic	[Drama] [Suspense]	4/28/21	935
I Want to Stay Alive		Iran	English	[Drama] [Romance]	2/22/21	835
Mousa	DMC	Egypt	Arabic	[Action] [History]	4/13/21	825

So, which global platform could *Rashash* be a good fit for? Looking at affinity data -- an indexed measure of overlapping viewership among TV Time users -- and honing in on the top 25 affinity titles identified, viewers of *Rashash* were also watching seven other HBO originals and four Apple TV+ originals.

After discovering HBO as a potential fit for this Saudi Arabian show, the study looked at viewer profile and engagement data to see if this title would align well with the HBO Max platform in the U.S. Current *Rashash* viewers in the MENA region skew male (similar to HBO Max viewers in the U.S.) and slightly younger, representing an opportunity to attract a like-minded audience.



Users of the TV Time app in the MENA region that follow *Rashash* are converting into actual viewers at a higher rate than for other series within the region with a similar genre. Additionally, the current viewers of *Rashash* are highly engaged with the title (over-indexing the benchmark set of titles by 169%). They also rate the content favorably.

	Follower Conversion Rate	Engagement Score	Audience Rating
	74.31% +93%	53.72 +169%	4.5 +9%
Benchmark Titles Among MENA Viewers	38.51%	19.98	4.1

With the right behavioral insights, and affinity and engagement data specifically, local titles can be evaluated for their potential fit with audiences outside their local markets. In the case of *Rashash*, one could reason that HBO properties may be a strong contender to take this series global.

New Datasets to Inform Content Decisions

Entertainment companies must now support a staggering number of market-driven and audience-related activities to optimize their content strategy. Integrating behavioral insights on how audiences anticipate and engage with content are likely to trigger new and better licensing deals that may not have been previously considered. The time is right to evolve traditional programming decisions that rely on a combination of gut instinct, manual processes and walled-off proprietary analysis.

With content costs skyrocketing, acquiring content that is relevant to your customers at the right price, can be achieved by identifying titles that elicit stronger engagement, appeal to the core customer demographic, and drive better viewer retention. Additive datasets provided by Whip Media complete the 360 view to assess underlying, qualitative performance attributes and help understand the relationship audiences have to a title/genre/talent. New solutions and audience intelligence is needed to help diversify content libraries for organizations -- and Whip Media provides just that.

As we've seen, anticipation can be a powerful early indicator of success. Affinity can further help refine programming by identifying and planning for unique content categories. When on-platform performance data is combined with these insights, in-house models become more reliable to score predictive title performance and prioritize avails. Undervalued assets can also be identified by expanding metrics beyond viewership and evaluating engagement and binge rates, thereby helping uncover a hidden gem at a fraction of the licensing cost that results in a low risk/high reward acquisition.



Conclusion

Distribution and programming executives face a plethora of new business models, global expansion and an insatiable public appetite for content. To face this exponentially bigger demand, they need new tools built for this dynamic landscape.

While behavioral insights present a new dimension to licensing, the industry is also in need of a transformational online content marketplace that complements such insights with workflows that keep up with today's ever-changing and fast-paced licensing world. A rights marketplace enriched with proprietary predictive insights, that serves as a central hub for discovering, buying and selling content rights, with sophisticated tools to streamline licensing workflows, will enable buyers and sellers to work more efficiently and get smarter deals done faster.



The Whip Media Exchange™ is a film and TV rights marketplace that's powered by our unique first-party consumer insights to predict content performance. This one-stop shopping experience for buyers and sellers cuts through the current content chaos by providing a centralized platform to discover new content worldwide enriched with the industry's first-ever Demand Score™. The Demand Score indicates how a title will perform on a given platform in a specific territory and availability window. The score is powered by combining data from TV Time users with actual outcomes from trillions of TVOD, AVOD and SVOD transactions. With this kind of predictive analytics at the fingertips of buyers and sellers, they can confidently begin to negotiate titles and license content rights within a single solution.

At the end of the day, media and entertainment organizations need intelligent consumer data to understand today's competitive landscape and find a solution that can empower them to make better business decisions.

To learn more about the Whip Media Exchange, contact exchange@whipmedia.com

ABOUT WHIP MEDIA

Whip Media is transforming the global content licensing ecosystem with a market leading enterprise software platform that centrally connects data, processes and teams throughout the digital distribution journey. Powered by proprietary data and predictive insights, we enable the world's top entertainment organizations to efficiently distribute, control and monetize their TV and movie content to drive revenue and direct-to-consumer growth. Whip Media has offices in Los Angeles, New York City, London, Amsterdam, and Paris.

ABOUT TV TIME

TV Time, a Whip Media company, is the world's largest TV and movie tracking app for consumers. Every day, over a million people use TV Time to keep track of the shows and movies they're watching, discover what to watch next and engage in a global community of more than 19 million registered fans.

For more information, visit whipmedia.com