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How Letterboxd Has Stolen the Hearts of People Around the World

Letterboxd: the movie reviewing app that has the world talking by storm. I can't even go into a movie theater without my friends asking about my Letterboxd or sitting next to a stranger who is scrolling through Letterboxd during the beginning of the commercials.

Letterboxd is an app created by Matthew Buchanan Karl von Randow that has changed the way many people, including myself, watch movies. The point of the platform is that you simply watch a movie, come to the app, add it to your diary of watched films, and leave a review. Millions of people review movies on Letterboxd a day, letting everyone live out their film critic dreams. In today's day and age, the average person is subscribed to multiple streaming services, allowing them to consume insane amounts of content and media. As new films come out and bombard the internet, people start to lose interest and their focus on quality movies. Having a platform like Letterboxd brings excitement to moviegoers by combining the activity of watching movies, whether you are with friends or alone, and instantly having a community to talk/converse about it. Letterboxd is a tool that constantly introduces users to new films.

It includes many features, one being a watchlist option that allows users to add films they want to see in the future to one list. This motivates the user to check things off their lists, giving people the determination to make time to watch the movies. Letterboxd came out in 2011 but only peaked in 2020 during the pandemic, which, in my eyes, was the perfect time for the app to gain traction. I know the number of movies I consumed during COVID-19 skyrocketed.

When I was watching movies, especially in 2020 while being at home, all I could think about was: “What are people saying on Letterboxd about this?”, or even “I cannot wait to document this on my list”. Being at home with all the time in the world to just over consume media, and now I could track it. Sounds like the best way to feed into my film geek ego. This was an amazing business opportunity for Letterboxd to reach for the stars, being more than just a popularly used app. Letterboxd participates in social media memes, conversations, tweets, even red-carpet interviews. Director Martin Scorsese even joined forces with Letterboxd to promote his most recent film, ‘Killers of the Flower Moon’. It is clear that Letterboxd is not only a fan favorite in the eyes of the viewers, but also those who are in the process of filmmaking. It is a way to connect these two communities who both have passion for the same thing.

By being an app where celebrities and regular users are on the same level of obsession, it even creates an environment where people can just review movies they enjoy. This raises the question of is this a pro or con to parasocial relationships? I for one think this brings the status of celebrities down to a more human level, allowing all this famous power to be diminished within a review. Not in a bad way, but in a way where I feel like a lot of people, especially older people can actually have respect for these actors. Not just seeing them as ‘out of touch’ celebrities.

There is this freaky hierarchy with celebrities but specifically critically acclaimed actors. Whether they are of nepo baby status, or just starting acting 2 months ago, actors hold this power as they walk and act through life. Everyday folk like me idolize some of them a little too much, sometimes assuming and even confusing them for their character counterparts. Having a social media platform that doesn’t have “verification” or followers counts as a priority creates a less intimidating space to enter as a beginner. Everyone is just another person reviewing movies. And I appreciate that celebrities can make comments and opinions on their favorite and least favorite

films and not worry about the media and outlets editing their words. It seems to me that these actors can also be a critic in a world where their job is to be put on the silver screen and be critiqued.

Another feature that I think is clever is being able to see the entire filmography of each actor and director. For example, a well-known director like Steven Spielberg's entire filmography can be accessed, even if he has any cameos in movies, and little descriptions of these movies. Having access to everything in one app is another reason why I think this app appeals to our modern world, especially trending within the GenZ and even Millennial generations. Everything is just right in front of you, making you want to watch more and more. I think this is a great feature for people who are really fans of specific actors and want to consume everything they have been in, and they can with a tap on their phone. I think it is interesting to see actors be critics or other actors and for directors to do the same. Everyone can use some constructive criticism, because no one is perfect.

I think this app has been on the rise because there is a lack of overall stability in the film community. Meaning, there wasn't really a social media app for movie fans to join in together and just talk about movies and why they love or hate them. It is such a simple idea, and yet I had never thought of a social media platform for this cause before Letterboxd. The best part of this creation is to start everything free. There is an option to get a membership to become a patron, but being able to use every feature on the app can be accessed with a free account. I think it is also more educational than people realize, in the sense that it takes one's movie knowledge and adds so much to it. Many reviews do deep dive analysis and help me as a viewer catch things I didn't see the first time around. It gives me the space to not feel judged with what I like or what I don't. It is an experience that allows users to read about movies that aren't their typical taste, and

it helps push them out of their comfort zones. Sometimes I will use Letterboxd in the theater while I am watching a film, and based on the reviews of other moviesB, I will sometimes choose to continue my stay and watch another. Once a movie is watched, and the review is finalized, you can always come back and reference it. That is what I like about Letterboxd, it allows you to choose the day and year you watched the movie, and if it is a rewatch, there is an option for that as well. Everything is thought out with Letterboxd, and I continue to look forward to watching new films so I can log it in my Letterboxd.

Media About Letterboxd

1. [Letterboxd Interview With Bob Marley: One Love Cast \(Red Carpet\)](#)
2. [In Screening Room with Martin & Leo](#)
3. [Interviews on Letterboxd Website](#)