

## ABOUT THE COURSE

*Exhibition for Screen: Film Programming & Curation* by Louis Holder is a new, free course on OpenLearning.com which teaches aspiring Film Programmers, Seasonal Curators, Exhibitors and Filmmakers how to successfully programme films for audiences - focussing on Indie, Arthouse and Niche Titles/Releases (and their audiences), through the lens of student cinema, community cinema and the independent cinema.

This short course will delve into the philosophy and practice of film exhibition and its place within the production chain of UK, European and Internationally-produced productions, in a fast changing digital landscape where the charm of personally curated films (and seasons) are diminishing, but much desired. The course will also cover the practice, and the study of, effective programming for student and community audiences.

A rapidly changing contemporary film and moving image culture in recent years has unsurprisingly forcefully stipulated mass change amongst the practicalities and execution of independent exhibitors, student and community cinemas as a whole - in order to maintain audience interest for what otherwise Mass Exhibitors can provide.

The role of the archive (career / thematic) retrospectives should not be understated, such that it provides a key jointly artistic and profitable venture that the arthouse should wander into often, and more often at that. Moreover, the effort and celebration thereof of 'the archive' requires an advanced skillset, not just for the programming - but also for the skills in locating audiences for them.

In an age of digital and social confusion, where significant attention spans amongst audiences are scarce, and a certain drive for personally curated cinema experiences (the rise of *MUBI*) the course argues - what's the place of commercial cinemas today, and is it old-fashioned enough that one day society would see it phased out completely? To what extent are *Netflix* and *Amazon Prime*, renewed manifestations of the 'multiplex' for the twenty-first century?

Award-winning Film Producer & Director Louis Holder has previously published the course: [\*An Unloved Story: Her & Lost In Translation\*](#) - which was No. 1 in the Film & Media Arts section of OpenLearning.com when it debuted in 2015. Over 200 students enrolled during the course tenure. In addition to his filmmaking practice, he has been a voluntary lecturer for the *BFI Film Academy* on the changing nature of independent filmmaking and indie cinema, and is also an actively researching Indie Film for his dissertation.

## ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

## EXHIBITION FOR SCREEN: THE ART, PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE OF FILM PROGRAMMING

*The Art, Philosophy and Practice of Film Programming* is more of an extended foreword to the contents within *Exhibition for Screen: Film Programming & Curation*, which will be available on OpenLearning.com soon. The short course is free for anyone to enroll online to, and is aimed at aspiring programmers, exhibitors and aspiring Film Producers in order to understand more about the national and global Digital Cinema Landscape today, as well as film and programming in a holistic manner - as a means of entertainment, and the ability to democratise it affordably and effectively for as wide of a community as possible.

*A Quick Guide to Programming* is available in a separate guide, similar to this one.

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## WHAT IS A FILM PROGRAMMER?

Simply put, a film programmer is responsible for choosing which films play, and how often they are shown, in their cinemas. They play a key (curatorial) part in the exhibition phase of cinema and is often a highly desired role amongst student cinemas, community cinemas and cinemas in general. Often, the larger the cinema (more screens, therefore more sites to screen films); the more programmers that are required in order to facilitate it.

There are many factors which inform the 'decision-making' process required as a Film Programmer, including:

- What films are on offer from distributors and at what terms (i.e license fees, formats available to screen from, release dates etc).
- The running times of films
- How films are performing at a cinema location
- The particular tastes of audiences at a specific location.

Most film programmers will tell you that the best of their job is watching hundreds of movies every year to decide which ones will screen in their cinema, based on which they will think will most appeal to their cinema audiences.

The UK film programmer regards the cinema week as Thursday to Wednesday. New films open on a Friday and generally, their first weekend box office is extremely important as it will dictate the film's sessions for the following week. Usually, in a cut-throat and competitive business such as cinema exhibition, if a film can't find a sizeable audience on its opening weekend, its sessions are cut dramatically - usually a good programmer will understand how widely appealing a film might be at the planned time of programming (based on further factors we cover later on in this guide including Genre, Storyline and Celebrity Appeal and Social/Political Factors), and will therefore pre-plan accordingly.

When programming, a good programmer should consider their own title(s) they're currently planning, in relation to other titles which will be shown at the same time in the year. Are there any films which are similar? Will there be enough (or too little/much) choice at a specific site (cinema)?

## EXHIBITION FOR SCREEN: THE ART, PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE OF FILM PROGRAMING

Different Cinema Types will understand the role of Programming in a different capacity. Student, Community Cinemas and to some extent Independent & Arthouse Cinemas [dependent on their business structures respectively] will have a large degree of autonomy and overall creative control in terms of their programming, because it is so niche - and the remit of the premises themselves are in the fact that they are supposed to provide a more genuine and personalised film experience. Because of how different the process of acquiring films is, for these types of cinemas compared with Multiplexes - there is the assumption that programmers will only programme the film once.

Programmers for a Multiplex (such as Cineworld, Odeon or VUE) will either work from their central offices or in a regional hub site, because of the vast number of sites (cinemas) owned by a particular chain. The operation to manage the programming at all these sites would be far too complex and inefficient to run in terms of time management, so cinema chains centralise this operation by having a number of programmers that would programme regionally. Cinema Managers (and a combination of other administrative staff and box office figures collected) from these sites would be used to inform the central programming team who would then remotely programme these films.

As a Multiplex or Independent Cinema, The technology used to programme these films is highly advanced, as it is specialised and expensive.

## HOW DO I BECOME A FILM PROGRAMMER?

Understandably, the role of Film Programming can be perplexing for anyone - whether that be on the nature of understanding it as a role, within a broader sense of cinema exhibition or the pathway(s) required to be a film programmer.

In a broad sense, becoming a film programmer is largely a self-motivated role - driven by an enthusiasm for film, an understanding of different types of films and audiences, understanding the interplay of marketing and 'hype' amongst general & niche demographics. People who are currently Film Programmers will have, for the most part, actively sought out work in *that* particular sector as opposed to being introduced to it through General, Higher or Further Education - this is because of how closed off and 'private' the area of programming and exhibition is in cinema. In other words, you wouldn't get taught about film programming on the average Film course.

### FORMAL EDUCATION & COURSES

There are a number of reputable courses on Film Programming, Exhibition and Curation (or a combination of these) across the UK - if you are considering pursuing a course in this area, you must really ask yourself if you want a career in this area, because of how many hours you'll be putting into academic and industry practice.

## EXHIBITION FOR SCREEN: THE ART, PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE OF FILM PROGRAMMING

It is not uncommon for graduates of BA Film Courses, or Film Studies courses to go onto MA Film courses that offer the aforementioned as pathways - or indeed they might choose solely MA Programming, Exhibition and Curation focussed ones. Here are the most popular COURSES [as of September 2018]:

- [Film Studies, Programming and Curation \(MA\), National Film and Television School](#)
- [Film Programming and Curation \(MA\), Birkbeck University of London](#)
- [Film Distribution and Marketing \(MA\), Birmingham City University](#)
- [Film, Exhibition & Curation \(MA\), The University of Edinburgh](#)
- [Film Curation MSc, University of Glasgow](#)

## OTHER WAYS

Most people who work in programming have not studied as part of a formal course but have instead come from one of a variety of different areas - film criticism, box office staff, projection, film research or through knowing somebody who knows somebody. Film Programmer isn't all that confusing as it's made out to be, however there is lots of learn in order to make the most out of programming for your cinema!

Deptford Cinema are *always* looking for Programmers, as long you're happy, helpful and enthusiastic enough! Get in touch with their [Facebook Page](#) - or just turn up to a public forum meeting every Sunday at 11am in the cinema itself.

Other Community Cinemas may be open to programming suggestions (particular student and local cinemas), and if you look at their websites - they may be looking for new faces or people to programme films. Often these are voluntary roles, and may be flexible with other roles within the operations of the cinema specifically. [Here's a map](#) of some of the other Community Cinemas - which are members of Cinema For All, though there are others!

*If you are part of a Student or Community Cinema, you can request a copy of the current version of [National Film Societies - Contact List from me personally](#), which has an up-to-date table of currently active community cinemas - and will be updated every year in July/September.*

Although some Student/Community Cinemas may *not* be open to programming suggestions (because they're a full committee or need you be affiliated with them i.e a student), most places (assuming they have lovely people at the helm) will be open to suggestions - which counts as programming experience for certain (and something to add on your portfolio) even if it's not something substantial.

These two groups are great for getting involved with programming discussion at a student/community/local film programming level:

[UK Film Societies and Community Cinemas](#)  
[University Film Society Network](#)

# THE DAY-TO-DAY TASKS OF A FILM PROGRAMMER

Monday is programming day, when film programmers consider weekend figures and arrange their schedule based on what is working best for their locations.

The film programmer has one of the most important roles in exhibition, as the activities of nearly all exhibition staff are influenced by the weekly program.

Best not to phone a film programmer or sales agent from a distribution company on a Monday unless your question is very important as their focus is the following week's program. Most Distributors who are based in London will not answer your emails/calls unless you're the most senior person at a reputable cinema (and emailing/contacting from the address/telephone line associated with it).

Occasionally, Distributors sometimes lobby the film programmers not to reduce the number of sessions on a particular film, or the film programmer may be seeking to reduce sessions for a film which has performed extremely poorly.

The film programmer may move some films into smaller cinemas to accommodate new Openers (the latest releases, Hollywood/Blockbuster films for instance). All cinemas usually do their programming using a grid system (nowadays on a digital spreadsheet) so they can keep track of all their cinemas/screens. Some cinemas may use a matrix template, and program by hand or have a dedicated TMS (Theatre Management System) to help manage the entire cinema workflow.

In addition to telling distributors what changes they intent to make to the previous week's sessions of their films, the film programmer has to provide various different departments within their own organisation with the final program for the coming week so they can do their own jobs. The technical staff, who manage the actual screenings, need to know what to screen when, ensure they have the appropriate KDMs (digital keys) lined up and the film programmer also lets them know what trailers should be playing with which films.

In the UK, trailers are automatically ingested via Satellite/Internet and monitored by a Digital Cinema Advertising Company - for example, DCM (for Cineworld, Odeon or VUE) or Pearl & Dean (for Arthouse, Independent & some non-theatrical venues). This will come as an 'Ad Pack' which may either be sent daily/weekly and may or may not be tailored to the film/genre of films.

These adverts are all given an age classification rating by BBFC (British Board of Film Classification) - for example, U, PG, 12A, 15 or 18 for whatever their team of examiners deem is an appropriate age by which audiences are able to see the film. What is important to note is BBFC is responsible for reflecting the ever changing attitudes and issues in today's society, rather than imposing what one might define as their *own* views. The BBFC

## EXHIBITION FOR SCREEN: THE ART, PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE OF FILM PROGRAMING

are very insistent on this. If someone has an issue with an age rating, they can make a complaint to BBFC.

Once an advert is rated and approved by BBFC, in coordination with one of the Advertising Agencies, the advert will be sent as a DCP within an 'Ad Pack' of DCPs. In a cinema server playlist; the 'Ad Pack' will contain DCPs for each of the adverts (whether that be commercials or trailers) and they'll be listed as such with the DC-standard naming convention. In terms of all DCP assets, [The naming convention for DCPs are very complicated](#), although as a Independent / Volunteer Programmer you are not expected to know this - when working in Multiplexes; you might need to know this.

All staff working in a particular site, need to know the final programme.

The advertising department needs to have the final program so they can ensure the correct information appears in directory and display ads and the website managers need the program for the same reason.

The front-of-house staff need the coming week's program too - so the ticket sellers can ensure they are selling tickets for the correct films at the designated times (although the TMS automates this process entirely), and the ushers can be certain that the right film is playing at any given time. They may need to alter the marquee outside the cinema to take off any reference to films that are finishing and add any new openers. Likewise, display staff need the program so they can plan new displays or make arrangements to take down displays for films that are no longer playing.

Marketing staff need the weekly program so they know what messages to send to their loyalty program customers or include in their weekly newsletters or social media posts.

In some single screen or double-screen cinemas, the film programmer (as mentioned before) may need to multi-task and fulfill other roles, such as managing the cinema, booking and designing advertising, running the technical side of screenings, changing the marquee (or overall foyer configuration) or managing displays.

Over the past several years, cinemas have been converting to digital and 3D as the old 35mm prints are phased out. This has involved enormous investment and effort by exhibitors so that patrons can enjoy the best possible in-cinema experience. Film Programmers have been very involved in that process as they need to fully understand the capabilities of their location or circuit so they can program optimally.

Many film programmers look beyond films to round out their programs and offer diversity to their patrons by screening broadcasts of live concerts or theatre (i.e NT Live), or screening Alternative Content - otherwise known as Event Cinema - this includes opera, ballet and sporting events and E-Sports (such as Gaming on the big screen) which are beamed in (live) from overseas via Satellite even.

## EXHIBITION FOR SCREEN: THE ART, PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE OF FILM PROGRAMING

Film Programmers should maintain a key eye at knowing what's happening in their 'circuit' and working out what's screening at competitor sites (other cinemas in the area). A bustling area such as London's West End is rife with competition from the likes of the Multiplexes on almost every corner of Leicester Square, to the the cinemas located near Shaftesbury Avenue and Haymarket. Knowing how to diversify programming as much as possible, so as not to alienate audiences, but to invite them in - is the key to garnering as big of an audience as possible.

## CURATING YOUR CINEMA IN RELATION TO YOUR LOCATION

Film Programmers should maintain a key eye at knowing what's happening in their 'circuit' and working out what's screening at competitor sites (other cinemas in the area). A bustling area such as London's West End is rife with competition from the likes of the Multiplexes on almost every corner of Leicester Square, to the the cinemas located near Shaftesbury Avenue and Haymarket. Knowing how to diversify programming as much as possible, so as not to alienate audiences, but to invite them in - is the key to garnering as big of an audience as possible.

### CONSIDERATIONS TO MAKE: GO WITH YOUR *GUTFEELING*

Consider offering an alternative to the programming of other cinemas locally (as mentioned above). Although analysing a location, and the (potential) audiences who are situated there can be effective, in gathering useful data and statistics which can feed into marketing and providing backup for box office analytics, more often than not it is confusing.

Reasons for why it's confusing can vary, data is useful to your administrative team - but is it really going to make much of a difference in how much better you can understand your cinema?

If you're an Independent / Arthouse / Student or Community Cinema - use your status to be bold in your programming choices. Go with your gut feeling and be original - audiences who attend these types of cinemas, particularly the more grass-roots structures often entailed in volunteer-led cinema types, usually attend because of the personalised programming and the feeling they get when they attend.

Audiences attend volunteer-led cinema types because they love the feeling they get when they attend - this cannot be stressed enough. Sometimes because of the vulnerability in the business structure of a volunteer-led cinema or because there's only a single screen (and perhaps a small one at that), this causes the cinema organisers to programme 'too safely' and show a commercial film or 'safe choice' in regards to genre, stars, length and age rating - just to name a few factors. Don't play it safe, unless you're in a financially difficult situation. Even then, commercial films are usually expensive to book unless booking through agencies like Cinema For All.

## MAKING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR SINGLE SCREEN

Most Student & Community Cinemas, and a lot of independent cinemas across the country whose respective histories may stretch as far back as the early cinemas of the 1900s (Regent Street Cinema) or the art-deco proscenium-seating styles of the 1920s (Hammersmith Apollo), will operate using only a single screen. Other auditoriums may have been converted in latter years to include a second screen, either by splitting the size of the main auditorium in two or building an annexe that connects to the main building.

Grade Listed Venues, of which there are many, have numerous restrictions beset amongst them by the council(s) they reside in in order to protect the building's historic, artistic and architectural integrity. *The Rio Cinema*, in London's East End, recently opened a second screen from a unused basement space in December 2017 - this counts as an annex, for the Rio is a Grade II listed independent cinema from the art-deco period. This additional screen allows the programming team at The Rio to show more films, perhaps doubling up on their already eclectic and arthouse choices and loyal audience - or perhaps allowing a more universal crowd-pleaser to run alongside an arthouse film, thereby providing the audience with choice.

## THE SECOND SCREEN

Better so, two-screen cinemas should programme films at the same or similar start time - so prospective customers (then turned audiences) can actively make a consideration between two choices. When you've got a third screen (or more) you can start adding even more films and programming at alternate times, however for the purposes of grounding this discussion in the realm of student and community cinema we'll focus on one and two-screen cinemas - for the majority of you, this will be the case. Three or more screens is actively considered; a multiplex.

## CURATING A SEASON

All that time and money spent on watching films at the BFI, at your local Curzon, on MUBI, or better - your community cinema is about to pay off. All the time you've read about films, talked about films amongst your friends and colleagues and writing the off-kilter blog post once in a while is about to pay off too.

At its very essence, curating a Season (or even just a Screening) is all about moulding your favourite and most memorable filmic experiences into a sequence of screenings - a season, and presenting it to an audience. A season is a might have a (set of) strong or loose theme(s) as its primary thread - and like any thread, it is carefully woven. For instance, it may be a season celebrating some of the more obscure Cult Horrors from Japan in the 1980s, or a season on films made by non-binary directors.

Alternatively; you might want to make a Retrospective Season. In general terms, a retrospective is '*an exhibition or compilation showing the development of an artist's work*



## EXHIBITION FOR SCREEN: THE ART, PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE OF FILM PROGRAMING

*over a period of time*'. This will usually entail screening the works of a particular director (i.e David Lynch, Quentin Tarantino, Christopher Nolan). Retrospectives are one of the most popular types of Season - often being programmed at venues such as the Prince Charles Cinema, or the BFI - where they may also celebrate the work of a recently deceased actor/filmmaker/producer (i.e John Hurt Season) or to reaffirm the cultural, aesthetic and/or historical significance of an individual or cinematic era by creating a 'definitive' season.

Definitive Seasons are a hybrid of Retrospective and Repertory and when executed, represent a substantial portion of research behind them - often drawing in academics, archivists, and sometimes senior curators / family members or personal affiliates to give recommendations as to their best work(s). In some cases this can even be celebrating said artists' lesser known work; in order to give it wider appraisal, one that is more in line with their most famous work - thereby giving audiences a broader understanding of the Director/Artist as an artistic figure.

The beginning of 2018 saw BFI create a comprehensive, three-month season marking the centenary of the birth of Ingmar Bergman, one of the greatest and most prolific filmmakers of all time. This three-month season saw a (pro)active retrospective which shifted in tone and outlook as time went on. In other words, the earlier part of the season (January), focussed on Bergman's work in film and television; as a fearless, peerless explorer of the human psyche - highlighting his abiding preoccupations. However in the latter part of the season this shifted towards his work which involved questions of mortality, and coping with the complexities of life itself. This illuminating season is one of many examples of curated seasons which serve to give a highly-researched, definitive appraisal of an artist - as mentioned in the above paragraph. The season also had a prolonged run of Bergman's *Persona*, as part of a recent BFI co-led restoration effort.

In 2018, BFI and Curzon worked together to create *Agnes Varda: Visions of an Artist*, a retrospective season charting (and thus repopularising) her work from her feature-length debut *Le Pointe Courte* to her distinctive portrait of a fiercely independent woman and her desire for freedom, in *Vagabond*. The season then characterised her experimental efforts during the advent of the portable high-fidelity, but home video camera with *The Gleaners & I* - culminating in the rich career portrait that is *The Beaches of Agnes*.

### THOUGHTS FROM A PROGRAMMER

Remembering fondly of this season, I can recall the masterclass led by Agnes herself on stage in NFT1 - admittedly I had not heard or known much about Varda other than seeing her work, prior to the occasion. What was particularly interesting was the illuminating array of people in the audience, everyone immensely fixated on this one woman - you couldn't hear a pin drop. I recognised from the level of engagement and resounding applause that Varda is indeed a martyr for the independent filmmaker - regardless of age, race or class. Her work isn't just fearless or bold; it is a reminder that behind the camera is someone who transcended sexual stereotypes and taboo, great swathes of cultural change (however radical). It was particularly fascinating to see just how much effect this season had on re-affirming the importance of such a filmmaker. In fact, she's still making films today and

## EXHIBITION FOR SCREEN: THE ART, PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE OF FILM PROGRAMING

has released her film *Faces Places* (Distributed by Curzon Artificial Eye) in cinemas in the UK just recently (Sept. 2018), for which it was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Documentary at The 90th Academy Awards. So, in a way - The BFI knowingly planned a full season of which it's effects can still be felt, to culminate in her latest film's UK release and to create a definitive portrait.

Unsurprisingly; Filmmakers/Seasons are revisited because of the increased popularity or season. The film(s) might have a sudden resurgence in popularity due to emerging political activities locally, nationally or internationally that align with the narratives, political agenda, or theme(s) of fiction and/or documentary films. In other words, something might be happening today which triggers the relevance a film might have - in addition to that, the film may provide some insight or entertainment value which will add to our overall understanding or the way we feel about a particular movement. Take *I, Daniel Blake* for instance, when *I, Daniel Blake* came to screens here in the UK - it felt like an apt response to nationwide austerity and the impact the Conservative Government have had so far, since coming to power in 2010. *I, Daniel Blake* follows a narrative similar to that of the often confrontational subject matters inherent in the filmmaking of Ken Loach - in that it's about a character experiencing (unfortunate) class and thereby economics-driven hardship of some form or another. In this specific film, it is about a widowed carpenter who has to rely on state benefits (welfare) after a recent heart attack leaves him unable to work. Despite his doctor's diagnosis, British authorities deny Blake's benefits and tell him to return to his job. Through the film, he begins to develop a strong bond with a destitute, single mother who is struggling to take care of her two children.

The point I'm *actually* trying to make here is this film actually has not been revisited in commercial cinemas, beyond it's theatrical run back in 2016. In fact, this is testimony to the fact that Programmers are scared, and often put off from creating 'political programming' because it's something may or may not sell - in their eyes, it's more the latter. The reasons being for this are clear, people of course are politically divided - this is wherever you lay foot, beyond the UK even. Political Division is inherent across regions, so this film (like many others that similarly try to address hardship) wouldn't even be able to programme a 'run' of the film (or a season of films) regionally because this also *may not* work. This does deter from the fact that programmers should think outside the box, they should be daring and they should their passion to empower, not just a well-crafted and well-told film, but a national political agenda (and message to the government) altogether. This isn't to say all films, cinemas (and their programmers) should strive at every beating moment to work towards this goal but should rather use opportunities such as this; to make a statement.

*I, Daniel Blake* was one of the most screened films by Community Cinemas in the period of 2016-17, culminating in its recognition as the winner of Film Society Film of the Year at Cinema For All's [2017 Film Society of the Year Awards](#). This is another testimony to the open-minded and 'awoken' mindset of community cinemas - at least this is my interpretation of the national consensus of those who drive these gemstones, whether that from a former shopfront or basement conversion, to a local church or village hall, or even your local park.

## EXHIBITION FOR SCREEN: THE ART, PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE OF FILM PROGRAMING

One must remember, although London is a bountiful case-study in analysing and understanding (recurring) programming, much can be said for other parts of the UK as well. In many ways; because of a generations-spanning cultural scene consisting of film, theatre, the arts, galleries and other contemporary art forms - London is seen as this obscure and intangible microcosm from an outsider's perspective for which everything is complicated and multiplied; viewing patterns, cinemas, showing times, retrospectives, seasons and all kinds of paraphernalia. This isn't to say the rest of the country isn't as fruitful. In my opinion, other parts of the country have a much tougher time in (showcasing and) appealing to audiences because of the sheer amount of incoming releases (particularly of indies and arthouse flicks) versus the available screening spaces like Cinemas. However, this creates a greater sense of importance in Regional Programming as opposed to mega-cities like London - creating a 'less-confusing regional space', one that is more focussed and where films feel 'prepared' for their audiences, rather than the 'come-and-go' attitudes of a West-End Cinema's daily screening times.

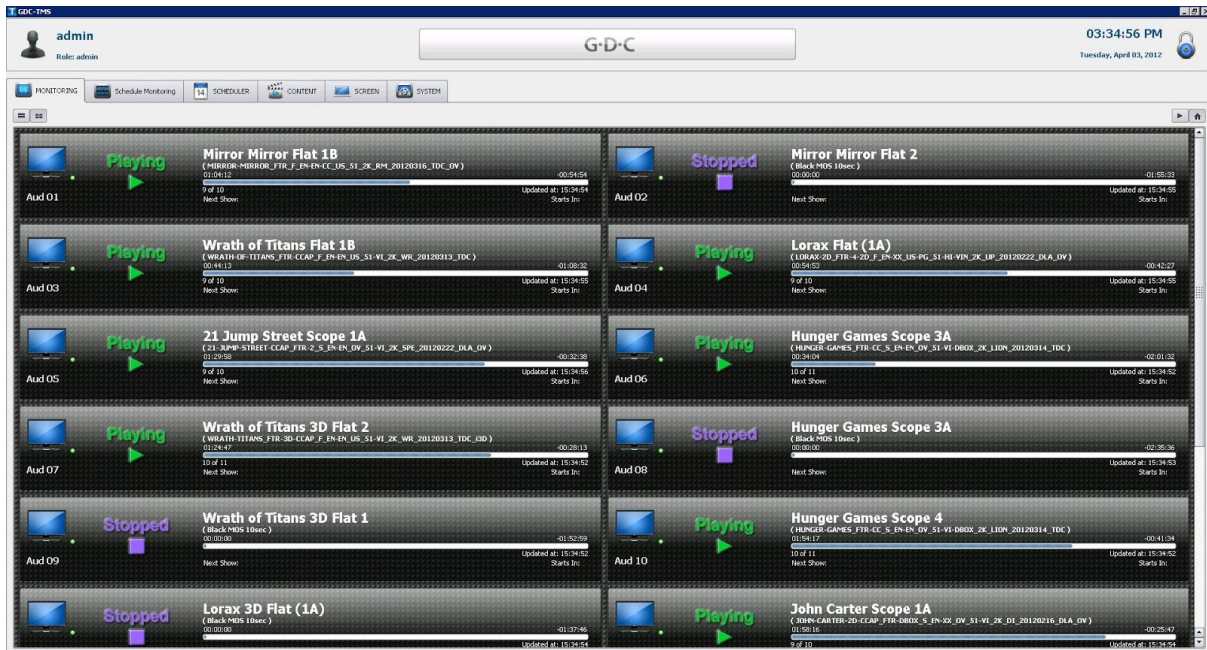
## FROM PROGRAMMING TO SCREEN: A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF DIGITAL CINEMA TECHNOLOGY

### MULTIPLEXES: THEATRE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (TMS)

Once again, this information is only specific to a Multiplex and in particular; would only be relevant if the site(s) have multiple screens.

Theatre Management System (TMS) is a software program for managing all the essential operations of cinemas. A TMS greatly increases the efficiency of all/a site(s), in all areas of exhibition so you as the Cinema Owner / Programmer can monitor different areas effectively.

The main function of a TMS is to provide centralised monitoring of the screening status of all auditoriums - displaying an digital overview of what is playing in each screen, see image below for example:



Dependent on the software designer; whether that be [Dolby TMS](#) or [ArtsAllianceMedia](#) (the two most conventionally used in the UK and Europe), your TMS will look something like this - and can be installed on any Computer system. Usually this system will be integrated into your internet browser and can be opened up using a specific set of login details which you will get upon ordering a license for it.

Using a TMS is relatively simple - *or at least it's designed to be*. In fact, there are numerous complicated things you're able to do with a TMS - because of the amount of complex things there are to do in a cinema, it's just too much (and financially unviable) to be able to maintain every minor detail - especially programming, starting and stopping films, on schedule.

Modern TMS systems will have convenient functions to synchronise schedules with ticketing (POS) systems. In other words, when you're choosing your seats and buying tickets; this information is synchronised and fed from ticket counter machines into the main TMS. Remember, a TMS is not a single piece of software; it is an online 'cloud-like portal' that can be accessed on multiple devices, at the same-time, providing real-time data. Conversely, whatever has been programmed in the TMS and setup correctly, will automatically display on the computer systems at all the cinema's box office desks.

Most TMS systems will have tabs for:

- Monitoring - seeing an overview of all screens current status, displaying errors if any.
- Schedule Monitoring - seeing an overview of the schedule (of certain/all screens and sites) either by day/hour/week etc.
- Scheduler - to schedule films
- Content - where content is ordered and ingested, a multiplex may have a single centralised server where films are 'downloaded' onto via Satellite or Internet or

## EXHIBITION FOR SCREEN: THE ART, PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE OF FILM PROGRAMING

ingested via Hard Drive and further (servers) which integrate with each screen's Digital Cinema Projector.

- Screen - Configuring Screen settings remotely from the TMS
- System - TMS Settings.

As a Programmer, or even Cinema Owner, you are not expected to know how to setup a TMS - as this highly advanced process will most likely be setup by the company who gave it to you, there are other digital cinema specialists like Barco (who also make industry-standard cinema projectors) and Bluespier who can also be contacted for assistance.

### DIGITAL CINEMA PACKAGES (DCP)

The 'Programmer' would order the DCPs (Digital Cinema Package) from the distributor for the relevant title (film) and would order however many KDMs (Key Delivery Message) the cinema chain would need per screen per site.

A Digital Cinema Package is a collection of digital files used to store and convey digital cinema (DC) audio, image and data streams. Understanding DCPs is a *completely different* mentality than understanding what a MP4 or .MOV file is for instance. A DCP is not a singular file.

A DCP is a "packing crate" for Compositions - you *play* a composition, you do *NOT* play a Digital Cinema Package. The Composition consists of numerous tracks, very small files which contain loads and loads of data.

A KDM is a Key Delivery Message - it is a special code required to play an encrypted movie. By default, all theatrically released films are protected by KDMs in order to protect feature films from being copied, leaked or manipulated in any way by someone who isn't the distributor or the programmer. Multiplex Programmers can request KDMs, which will then be straight to the cinema screen's Server (in the projection room) when the film has been programmed.

Films, KDMs and all Assets (files/packages of files) such as Adverts, Short Films and other programmable elements are all sent via Fibre Optic Connection (high-speed, hard-wired Internet) or Satellite straight to the screen. It is expected almost all cinema sites owned by a UK multiplex would have a Satellite or (Secure) Fibre Optic Connection, although there is no way of definitively knowing - as understandably - most information in this area of exhibition is kept strictly confidential.

Alternatively; because of how expensive it is for a single/chain of cinemas to adopt 'full digital delivery' - a Student, Community or Independent Cinema can use Linux-formatted Hard Disk Drives, where the DCP is stored on - whether with a KDM or without. Instances where the DCP would not be encrypted with a KDM would be, if it was a professionally-delivered student film, a specific independent feature film or other type of film - though this is extremely rare, especially for digital cinema projection (and the

EXHIBITION FOR SCREEN: THE ART, PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE OF FILM PROGRAMING

delivery/transportation thereof). These drives are commonly shipped in protective hard cases and are delivered by express courier to the exhibition site.

See above for the Digital Cinema Naming Convention [warning: it is very complicated].

Types of formats and additional information on this area is briefly covered in *A Quick Guide to Programming*.