



Fandor Independent Movie Service Launches

By Chris Tribbey

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An online independent movie service launched March 9, this one tying itself to Facebook and Boxee from the outset.

Fandor.com's opening line-up of 2,500-plus films comes from Kino Lorber, Cinema Guild, dGenerate Films, Typecast Releasing and Microcinema International, with more licensing deals promised, the company's executives said.

"I'm absolutely ecstatic to share all the exciting things that we've kept under wraps for months," said Monty Kosma, chief operating officer for Fandor. "We've made careful choices about what we take."

Built from the ground up with Facebook social networking in mind, a Fandor subscriber can post a clip from a film they're watching to Facebook, and that user's friends will have automatic, free access to that film. Subscriptions to the service offer unlimited, on-demand access for \$10 a month.

"Independent film fans seek a level of engagement that most movies don't deliver," said Chris Kelly, a former Facebook employee and social technology evangelist, who sits on Fandor's board. "Fans want to be enriched personally or moved by the film, to feel emotion. It's hard to predict what someone will like based on past viewing habits. These fans depend on personal recommendations for taste making. It's a natural fit for social [networking]."

Fandor executives say the films were chosen based on artistic and historic merit, with documentaries and short films, including *Happy Together*, *Old Joy*, *Carcasses*, *Funny Games*, *Searchers 2.0*, *Public Access*, *Cairo Station*, *Genius Within: The Inner Life of Glenn Gould* and *Iraq in Fragments*. A site blog, dubbed Keyframe, offers articles and interviews, and the site also includes a user-selected moments section.

The site will be available on the Boxee box, allowing subscribers to watch content on their HDTVs.

“I love how they’ve really been thinking ahead about the implications of social networking — this two-screen behavior, with a laptop while you’re watching content on a TV,” Kosma said of Boxee.

Also on the Fandor board is Ted Hope, independent producer of *Eternal Sunshine for the Spotless Mind* and *American Splendor*, and founder of the Truly Free Film movement.

“Fandor connects audience and creators directly, providing tools for each to engage deeply with the other in new ways,” Hope said. “Fandor’s model encourages discovery and financially rewards the films consumed most, giving many more filmmakers a chance to thrive.”

Kosma said there’s “a 100% chance” new licensing deals will be announced in the coming months.