

Hollywood's Big Hope: Google Shows Up With Suitcase Full of Money. It Could Happen!

by Peter Kafka

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Here's a script Hollywood has been pitching for some time: Google comes to town with a checkbook in hand.

It hasn't happened yet, but the longer that the company struggles to break into the market for "premium full-length content" — movies and TV shows — the more you hear studio types talking it up. And maybe Google is listening!

The [New York Post](#) reports that the search giant is in talks to buy the digital rights to Miramax's movies; Disney is about to sell the studio off to Filmyard Holdings.

The supposed deal makes plenty of sense on paper: Google finally gets its hands on movies people want to see — "No Country for Old Men", "Pulp Fiction", a lot of very earnest indie films from the mid-90s, etc — and Filmyard gets an instant cash infusion to help defray the cost of its acquisition.

To date, Google has struggled to get the big studios to let it put its content up — for free or for rent — which is why many Hollywood types have suggested that the company simply purchase a "Google window", by buying a studio or a piece of a studio.

You can see why Hollywood would be pushing for a deep-pocketed suitor to show up. And you can see

why Google has been resistant to that idea: If they start writing checks to Hollywood, then every content player, everywhere, will expect the same thing. And Google has always insisted that it's not in the content business, period.

But that's getting harder and harder to believe, as the company spends more and more time trying to beef up its media offerings (see, for instance: Google Music, if it shows up).

Meanwhile the ability and willingness to write big checks is directly connected to the Netflix Web success story: So far Reed Hastings and company have racked up a [billion-dollar-plus bill for digital content rights](#), and that number is going to keep climbing.

Which is why it's significant that [Google hired Netflix executive Robert Kyncl](#) to hammer out Hollywood content deals earlier this year. A big-dollar Miramax deal would indicate that he's working from the same playbook he used at his last gig.

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