SECURITY: The foundation of film distributor *trust*

Video on Demand is Here to Stay

Security in video on demand (VOD) platforms is a topic that can feel like peeling back an onion with never-ending layers, each revealing new and confusing issues. It's enough to make a person throw up their hands in frustration and wish for the days of video tape and camcorders.

But as audiences' viewing habits change, there's no denying that film festivals will have to adapt to the new digital norm, and that means identifying which security measures will give you the advantage to establish trust with content providers and set your platform aside from competitors in the industry.

And make no mistake - audiences' viewing habits are changing:

» Statista predicts an increase in the number of people who use VOD services to grow from 143.3 million in 2020 to 164.9 million by 2025 in the US alone.[1]

» Hub Entertainment Research clocked a 75% increase in the number of viewers who paid to stream a movie between July 2020 and June 2021 (based on a study of 3,000 users in the US).[2]

» The same Hub study found that 29% of participants plan to exclusively watch new film releases on VOD platforms vs. 27% who plan to exclusively go to cinemas and 20% who plan to do a combination of the two.[3]

Securing Your Reputation

Your festival's reputation among filmmakers, distributors, and buyers requires the reassurance that their content is safe in your hands. As on-demand viewing quickly moves towards becoming a standard inclusion in the industry, festivals that want to stay competitive in the market will need a VOD platform to exhibit content and trusted security measures to back them up. In fact, licensing and rights contracts may begin requiring them. The International Documentary Association (IDA) predicts a future where "the grant in a standard festival license may now need to include digital distribution rights, errors and omissions insurance, and expanded representations and warranties that cover broader commercial screenings" to ensure content is appropriately protected from unauthorized usage.[4]

Without digital security as a foundation, your ability to secure films from concerned distributors may be at risk, as loss of revenue is at the forefront of their minds. Digital TV Research predicts global revenue losses in TV and film to grow to $51.6 billion by 2022, giving distributors good reason to be cautious with their content.[5] Putting their concerns at ease with credible security measures can earn your festival the trust needed to curate a VOD platform and stake your claim in the future of cinema.

## Current Standards in Security

Currently, the cornerstone of digital security is **Digital Rights Management,** or DRM, which is a means of encrypting content to protect it from theft and controlling how content is consumed. DRM includes security features such as:

›› Geoblocking

›› Device restrictions

›› Output protection

The most important of these DRM protections is encryption, which locks content that can only be accessed with a decryption key.

DRM ensures that only authorized users and authenticated players can access films, further protecting your content.

Additional security features can be layered into each step of the user experience to
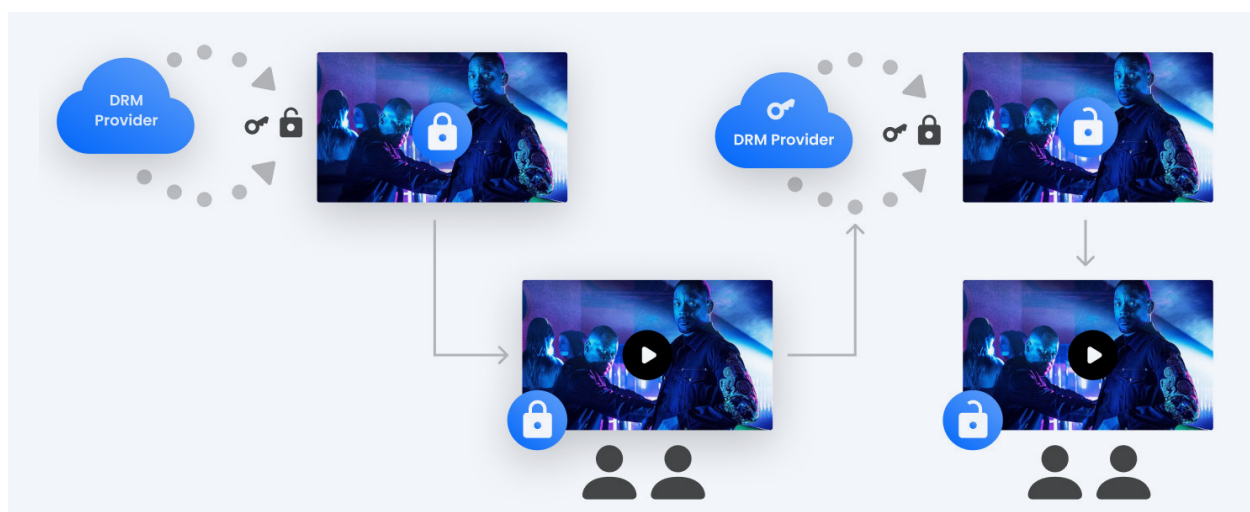
maximize your defenses, beginning with the creation of a user's account.

›› Credit card verification

›› Sales limits

›› IP address checks

›› Concurrent playback limits

Together, these measures build a fortress around your content that reduces the risk of piracy and gives content suppliers confidence that all licensing and rights requirements are met. They also help maintain the reputation you've spent years cultivating, and can attract eager professionals looking for a trusted venue to showcase their work.

Differentiating Yourself from Competitors

As newer technologies prove themselves to be uniquely effective in the battle against piracy, they're rapidly becoming the new standard to which security will be held. Previously considered premium options, measures like forensic watermarking and

> *"...Incorporating forensic watermarking, or individual watermarking - that is key for studios."*
>
> **Gabe Van Amburgh,**
> Film Exhibition Manager & Short Film Programmer at SXSW

multi-key DRM are now more accessible and offer a high-level of confidence for distributors and festivals alike.

Serving more as a deterrent than a preventive measure, **forensic watermarking** assigns a unique code to each user who views the film on a variety of devices by seamlessly switching between two different versions of the film. This unique code can be traced back to a specific IP address, which in turn makes it much easier - and *faster* - to track pirated copies of films back to an individual user.

Piracy investigations that previously took months can be reduced to a matter of days, providing reassurance that breaches can be handled with urgency and efficiency. Forensic watermarking is so sensitive, it can even be used to track down a camera that records a video on another screen, such as a laptop or TV - it's *that* versatile and effective.

Moving beyond the basic protections offered by DRM, the more advanced **multi-key DRM** can mitigate the risk associated with higher quality visual content by restricting access to HD titles by device type.

Forensic watermarking
enabled on content

The two player copies
create unique codes

These codes allow users
ID Addresses to be traced
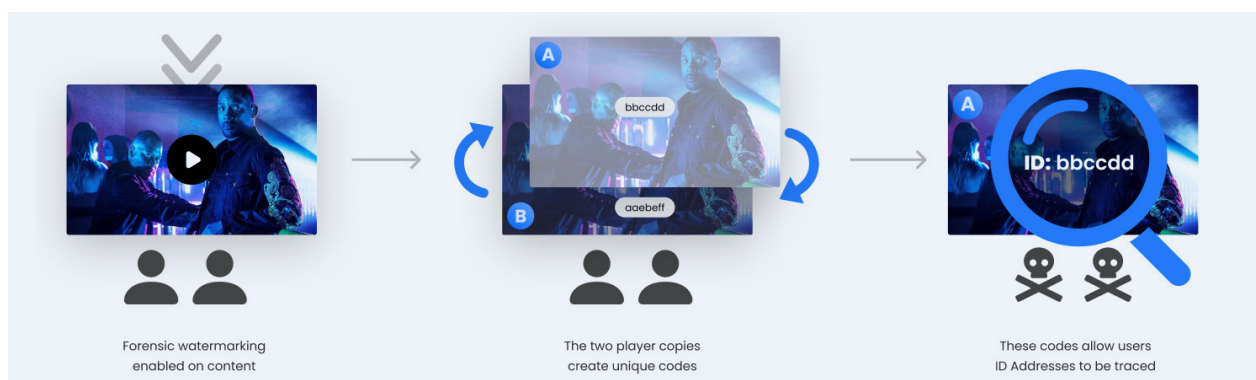
For example, a laptop, which can be modified with various piracy software, is a less secure device than a Chromecast or Apple TV, which are more difficult to alter. HD streaming can be restricted to such devices to lower the risk of a security breach.

Advanced security measures such as these can help give your festival the edge that sets you apart from others in the field and establishes your ability to provide the most secure platform for showcasing your curated content.

Trust is the Foundation of Distribution

VOD platforms are popping up all around us. Adapting to new expectations within the industry with quality security measures can help you stay competitive in your expanding market and earn your festival the trust required by distributors to acquire content.

Bridging the traditional release with digital gives independent films a chance to be

noticed with an insurance policy that, when combined with all security features, can limit exposure to piracy, profit from a broader reach, and allow audiences to experience your festival's vision in the digital format they're calling for.

If you're interested in learning more about how you can improve your VOD security in order to strengthen your relationships with distributors, visit www.shift72.com/contact-us to start the conversation.

1 Stoll, Julia. "Digital Market Outlook: U.S. Video-on-Demand Users by Type 2025." Statista, July 22, 2021.
   https://www.statista.com/statistics/455730/digital-video-users-type-digital-market-outlook-usa/.
2 "Predicting the Pandemic: Wave 4." Hub Entertainment Research, July 2021.
3 "Predicting the Pandemic: Wave 4." Hub Entertainment Research, July 2021.
4 Beer, Steven. "Licenses and Rights in the Post-COVID Festival Landscape." International Documentary Association, September 29, 2021.
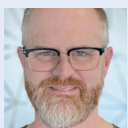   https://www.documentary.org/column/licenses-and-rights-post-covid-festival-landscape.
5 "Online TV & Movie Piracy Losses to Soar to $52 Billion." Digital TV Research , October 30, 2017.
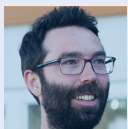
About Shift72

The world is going hybrid...And we're redefining the norm.

Shift72 is the world's fastest growing video on demand (VOD) entertainment platform. Trusted by the biggest names in the industry, our platform is the white labeled secure bridge that rapidly delivers the theatre and event entertainment experience - complete with content offerings from the world's biggest studios - to audience's homes.

To learn more about how Shift72 is leading the way into a hybrid future, visit our website: www.shift72.com