

# Book Trailers: Available at a Library Near You

By Emily Ellis

**P**icture this: A teen browsing the library's homepage comes across a media player under the headline "Book Trailers." Curious, he hits play. A black screen fades in to block white text describing a post-apocalyptic world, deep music filling the background. A dramatic image of a teenage boy appears followed by the haunting sound of a heartbeat. Captions continue to relay the story of a world in which teenagers are used as full body donors upon their parents' request. The heartbeat becomes stronger, faster, as if the boy is scared. Images of surgeons with face masks and scalpels flash onto the screen, then suddenly a flat line and a caption. The screen fades to black and a book cover appears. (<http://www.greenwoodlibrary.us/teenbooks.asp>)

Multimedia reader's advisory focuses on providing services in our digital world. Any department in any library can take advantage of technology, and with a little creativity produce fun, effective, and free reader's advisory tools for the web that will continue to bridge the gap between media and print. All age groups are now actively online. Research shows that 93% of teens age 12-17 use the Internet daily. The percentage of adults and seniors using the Internet has also increased since data was collected in 2005 by the Pew Internet & American Life Project. The newest information shows 83% of adults ages 40-44 are frequent Internet users and usage of seniors ages 70-75 has increased from 26% to 45% in just three years<sup>1</sup>. Patrons are online, so the presence of libraries and library services offered online needs to meet the demand.

Libraries create a variety of reader's advisory tools for patrons who enter the building: bookmarks are offered with suggested reading lists, displays are created with signage and decorations to highlight genres and authors. With the majority of our patrons creating and

browsing information on the Web, libraries need to expand reader's advisory resources to homepages and social networking sites. Librarians can record book review podcasts, maintain blogs, and use video to encourage patrons to read.

Creating commercials for upcoming and already available literature has become the latest Library 2.0 trend which includes interactive services and programming that encourage community involvement through the use of technology. What is a book trailer? Simply defined, a book trailer is a video advertisement for a book similar to a movie teaser or trailer. It is a commercial designed to get your community excited about reading.

There are three types of book trailers you can create with a variety of approaches that make each unique. How much time are you able to dedicate to the project? Do you have access to the necessary technology and software? What style is appropriate for the book you've selected? The answer to these questions will help you determine if you should create a full feature film trailer with actors, a flash animated trailer, or a trailer made from still photos with text and narration.

There are four essential steps to creating a book trailer: planning, producing, editing, and uploading. Planning provides focus and allows you to organize your thoughts into a coherent whole. By taking the time to plan out what you would like to say and portray in your book trailer, you will be able to create a final project efficiently and quickly.

The planning process is all about making decisions. Start with the most obvious step: pick out a book. Books with a strong underlying theme or distinct visual elements lend themselves easily to the creative process. After you have selected the book, choose

a format for your trailer. Will you create a feature film trailer, or are you proficient with Adobe Flash and would like to create an animated project? Once you have decided on an appropriate format, determine a length for the project. A book trailer is exactly as defined, a teaser, a video advertisement intended to capture the attention of the audience and encourage them to check out the highlighted book. While planning the project, be aware that you must be able to keep the viewer interested from the beginning to the end of the trailer. If the trailer becomes too long, the audience might lose interest. A suggested length for a book trailer is no longer than a minute. With one minute, you can visually summarize a book and highlight an exciting element that will entice the viewer to read further.

Writing a script and creating a storyboard complete the planning process. Without proper planning you will waste time looking for media or filming scenes you do not need. While writing a script, consider using important or effective quotes from the book and jacket sleeve. If you choose to write your own script completely, be sure that you provide enough information to tell what the book is about without giving too much away. A storyboard is a panel or series of panels of rough sketches that outline a sequence of events or plot changes in a production. Completing a storyboard will reduce the amount of time you spend gathering media.

Media is gathered and compiled during the production phase of creating a book trailer. It is important to find materials that are copyright and royalty free. It can be faster and more efficient to create your own media. If you don't have the time or the talent to take photographs or compose music, there are several sites online that provide access to public domain and copyright free media. Consider visiting Creative Commons ([www.creativecommons.com](http://www.creativecommons.com)), a nonprofit organization that offers a variety of free licenses for a creator's work including images, music, and video. Each entry has a separate license including an Attribution license that lets others copy, distribute and display both copyrighted and derivative works as long as credit is given to the original artist.

The editing phase occurs after all the necessary media has been compiled or created. Most desktop computers come standard with some editing software. For PC users, Windows Movie Maker is easy to use and offers a decent selection of video effects and transitions that can be added to your project. Import images, video, multiple audio tracks, and record narrations directly into the project. Other free, downloadable options include Microsoft Photo Story 3, Scratch (<http://scratch.mit.edu/>), and Audacity (<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>). Additional options available for purchase include Adobe Premiere Elements 7 and Soundbooth which offer vast editing and effects options. If you have access to a Mac, iLife comes ready equipped with software to record, edit, and upload your files directly to the web.

Uploading and sharing your work is the final step in creating a book trailer. Book trailers are short by design with a relatively small file size allowing them to be uploaded easily on the Web. Consider uploading your completed file directly to your library's homepage. Most websites have the capability to upload media files directly to the site. The web software will create a player to show the file. If you have an outside group manage your homepage, upload the file to a blog or social networking site. By uploading the trailer onto several sites, the library provides optimal opportunities for patrons to access the resource.

Completed files can also be uploaded to video sharing sites such as YouTube. By uploading the file to YouTube, the library has a direct link to the video and is also provided with an embedding code that will allow you to add the file to other sites. If you are unfamiliar with book trailers, consider searching video sharing sites for examples. Publishing companies with advanced technology and budgets are creating exciting, professional movie trailers for their upcoming releases, but librarians don't need fancy software and cameras to create effective videos. Focus on creating attention grabbing projects that introduce the viewer to materials available at the library and communicate why a patron should select the highlighted title.

The opportunities are endless when you combine technology with print. Book trailers are especially exciting because they can be

created for free using the technology that your library currently owns. Libraries can turn book trailers into a learning experience for all ages. Create a media program at your library where participants can learn about script writing, storyboards, film production, and editing through a series of workshops. Not only will the audience learn how to create a video, but they will also learn to distill important information from the text for summary and discussion. Invite local professionals to come to the library and speak about the film industry or what it takes to make a movie. Your library can also host film contests, share trailers with local schools, and screen completed projects on TVs within the building.

Book trailers provide an opportunity to build relationships, encourage creativity, support patron interests, and continue to bridge the gap between technology and literature. With a little time, libraries can create fun, interactive reader's advisory resources for the web that will stimulate and excite our communities and answer the question, "what should I read next?"

1. Jones, S., & Fox, S. (2009). Generations Online in 2009. *Pew Internet & American Life Project* Retrieved from: [http://www.pewinternet.org/~media//Files/Reports/2009/PIP\\_Generations\\_2009.pdf](http://www.pewinternet.org/~media//Files/Reports/2009/PIP_Generations_2009.pdf)

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