

Copyright for Movies—A Case Study

Copyright for Movies

The copyright for a movie is owned by the Producer. Effectively no-one is allowed to see their movie unless they give permission for it to be shown. Big theatre chains negotiate multi-million dollar deals with the producers to be able to bring a movie to screen, knowing they will make money from people purchasing tickets to come and see it. When a movie is released on DVD (or streaming as is more common now), the producer grants a limited license for that movie to be viewed in the home, but you are not allowed to show it publicly (including at a church). If you want to show it publicly, you have to ask the Producer for permission to do so, and they will probably want quite a bit of money to allow you to do so.

But the Producers don't really want to be called up 50 times a day to deal with a copyright issue, so they have licensed copyright companies to handle the deals. The company we tend to use for music (CCLI), offer an independent license for screening movies called the "Church Video License" (CVL). Some, but not all, of our churches have purchased this license and so are able to freely show movies owned by Producers linked to CVL. The tricky thing is that not all producers are. So another company named Heritage, has attempted to gather up as many other producers as they can and offer "Big Studio Movie License" (BSML) to churches to deal with them.

CVL or BSML?

So, which one (CVL or BSML) does your church need to purchase? Well – it depends on what movies you want to show. For some movies you need one, for other movies the other. Believe it or not, there are some Producers that are on neither list – so even holding both licenses does not mean you can just show anything. So perhaps the more pertinent question is "what movies do I intend to show at my church?" Then you can work out what you need in terms of licenses...

Both companies have web sites that help this process.

BSML (<https://www.church.bsml.com.au/>) has a tab of "Film Suggestions" which is very user friendly for churches. They also have all the films listed (with pictures!) under their studios. Once on a particular studio's section, you can then search for a title, although we can't find a way of searching the whole site for a movie title.

CVLI (<http://au.cvli.com/>) also now have a section of movie suggestions. You can also click on the Producers tab to get the list of producers. But it doesn't have a list of movies. The list of produces does have a link to their own websites (if they are large enough) which means that you can search for options through that.



A Case Study

You decide to hold a movie night at the church and decide to show “The Ultimate Gift”. you can google and find out the producer - wiki says that it is 20th Century Fox. So you follow the link to BSML and check their Producers. 20th Century Fox is not included. So you then go to the CVL list, and fortunately it is included on the list. Therefore, if your church has a CVL Licence, you can go ahead show it. If you only had a BSML, you can't do so. If the movie (or Producer) is not on either list and you still want to show it, you would need to contact the producer directly and ask permission.

Significantly, even if you have the license, it is still limited and you cannot advertise your movie screening in any way you choose. The Producers here are still concerned that you do not do something to upset their big dollar deals with the theatres. So you are allowed to promote a movie night “internally” – which includes in newsletters, website, social media pages (like Facebook), flyers or posters displayed or shared with the congregation and by word of mouth. But you are not allowed to advertise through radio or TV ads, in the newspaper, on public signage or through letterbox drops. You probably were not planning a TV campaign anyway, but watch out for putting movie details on your street sign or mentioning the showing of a movie in a letterbox flyer.

In case you are wondering, there is a cost associated with both licenses, and in both cases it depends on the number of people who usually attend your church. QB has negotiated discounts of up to 20% on both, if you purchase your license through our group deal.

Koorong Public Screening Licence

Koorong has obtained the exclusive public screening rights to a number of the DVDs that they sell in their stores. The license allows you to screen that particular movie publicly for a period of 12 months from the time of purchase.

Different from CVL and BSML, with the Koorong Public Screening licences you are allowed to advertise the movie, and you can even purchase resources to assist you to do so. You also may have a “suggested donation” for entry, but not a formal admission charge. However, the Koorong Public Screening licence covers only the specific movie you purchased it for, and if you want to show another movie you will need to purchase another specific licence.

The Koorong Public Screening licence, like CVLI and BSML, is valid for a year, and you may show the movie as often as you like during this time. The licence is also location specific, so is only valid for one church location.

Of course, if you have any questions or need further help, please do not hesitate to contact us in the office:

Queensland Baptists

Administrative Services

dapa@qb.org.au

07 3354 5648

