

Movie Night

General idea:

Which is the greenest option: renting a DVD online through Netflix or driving to Blockbuster to rent a DVD? There is no easy answer! Netflix travels through the mail to arrive at your house. But driving to Blockbuster also requires the use of transportation. The answer is: **it depends**. Challenge museum visitors to come up with reasons why one option may be greener than another. Inspire them to think of the decisions they make in their own lives!



Audience:

- Adults and young adults
- Adults and young adults often do not want to sit down at an activity table and do “kid stuff.” They worry that, if they try an activity, it might take up their whole day. In this activity, make sure that the adults are standing and that they can tell from looking at your table that it will only take 2-5 minutes. (Many will end up staying longer!) Keep it conversational!

Goal:

- Explain how a simple decision (Let’s watch a movie—how should we get the movie?) is actually very complicated and includes many different factors. There may not be an easy answer.
- Get adults thinking critically about the (often invisible) ways in which movies reach them and how this process impacts the environment.

Materials:

- Explanation of how Netflix travels
- Explanation of how your family drives to the video store
- List of pros and cons for each option

Checklist:

- **Make your own guess.** Which is greener: getting DVDs through the mail or driving to the store?
- Defend your assumptions—**why** did you assume one was greener than another?
- Familiarize yourself with the question using the summary and power point.
- Think about why one might be greener than another.
- Create a **visual hook**: what will attract adults and young adults to your table?
- Develop a verbal hook—what is the **first thing you will ask or tell the visitors**?
- Create a diagram or image to **explain the journeys** taken by the two different DVDs

Movie Night!

Which is Greener: DVDs in the Mail or Driving to the Video Store?



Journey of a Netflix DVD:

The DVD is delivered to the main Netflix distribution center in Sunnyvale, CA. Next, it is trucked, along with thousands of others, to one of Netflix's 53 regional distribution centers throughout the country. These regional distribution centers make a daily delivery to the nearest USPS site, where the DVDs then enter the stream of regular mail delivered by USPS right into your mailbox. When it's time to return the DVD, you toss it into any mailbox and USPS carries it back to the distribution center.

Journey of a Blockbuster DVD:

The DVD is delivered to the company's main facility in McKinney, TX. Here it is repackaged in a proper Blockbuster case. Next, it is trucked to one of over 5,000 stores across the US. You transport yourself to the store to pick it up, and transport yourself and the DVD back to your home. Movie time! When it's time to return the DVD, you return to the video store.



Packaging:

Netflix arrive at your home in a plastic sleeve that is recyclable. Blockbuster DVDs are stored in big plastic cases.

Which rental is green-ist? Factors to consider:

- When you pick your Netflix, you use a computer in a well-lit room. How much energy does this use?
- How close do you live to the Netflix distribution center? How close to Blockbuster?
- What if a family walks to Blockbuster or roller skates? If they have a hybrid car?
- What type of vehicle does USPS use to deliver to your house? (In some areas, they use Segways or feet!)
- How much mail does Netflix add to the USPS load? Does this increase the number of trucks used?
- Does it require more energy to make plastic cases for Blockbuster DVD's or sleeves for Netflix?
- How much energy does a physical Blockbuster store use?

Some fun facts:

- If you stacked every movie Netflix ships (about 2 million a day) in a single pile, the stack would be taller than Mt. Everest in a week.
- On any given day, more than 46,000 of the 100,000 titles available at Netflix are in distribution.
- In February 2009, Netflix hit 10 million subscribers.
- Netflix has claimed to spend about \$300 million a year on postage.
- Netflix ships about 17,000 tons of DVDs a year



But what about...:

- Watching movies in theaters! Does that use more energy or less?
- What about downloading movies? Will that solve all the energy problems?
- Should I order my groceries online, too? Is all online purchasing energy efficient?