

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

15 Ways the Independent Filmmaker Will Change in 2015

Elliot Grove · Wednesday, January 7th, 2015

With so many great prediction lists for 2015 around, I hardly felt the need to contribute. But the film industry is changing quickly and I wondered if filmmakers were actually changing along with it. Below are my predictions on how the role of the independent filmmaker will change in 2015. Do you see yourself fitting into any of these? In the film biz you have to evolve or die! What do you think? Please comment below so I can connect with you.

15. Filmmaker as YouTuber

Filmmakers have traditionally shunned YouTube. This is going to change and change dramatically.

The big money is piling into YouTube. And the reason is two-fold: TV ad revs are dropping as quickly as their viewerships. And secondly, brands have no direct contact with individuals on the net. That's where the YouTuber comes in pretty handy for a brand manager eager to connect with potential customers..

If you have a web series that appeals to, say, 24-35 year olds, you could be making money from advertising a brand trying to reach 24-35 year olds. Even crazier are [the Vine stars](#) —. make a series of 6 second videos on Vine, get a million followers and get between \$1,000 – \$10,000 per million subscribers for making a 6 second ad for a brand.

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14. Filmmaker as sexual cultural advisor

Filmmakers have traditionally shunned sex, deeming it porn. But there is much [filmmakers can learn from the porn industry](#),

Sex sells. I think this year we will see an increase in sex packaged up as movies—more of the [50 Shades of Grey](#) variety. i'm not saying this is good, or even desirable. I'm just saying. Which means of course that filmmakers become sexual culture advisors.

Read: [The Rise and Rise of the Hollywood Bonkbuster](#)

13. Fimmaker as cause-related content creator

When I started Raindance, I thought movie making was about dramatic stories. Then

documentaries started earning their keep as feature presentations in cinemas. And what are most successful documentaries? Cause-related, of course.

Al Gore's *Inconvenient Truth* is just one example of a cause related filmmaker. What about Angelina Jolie's *Unbroken*? Or *The Imitation Game* with its theme of homophobia in the 1950's here in the UK?

A filmmaker need not require the fancy budgets that these Hollywood types have mustered. What about the simple problem of domestic violence? Here's how one filmmaker, a cop in this case, [used a body cam to bring a wife beater to justice](#), and then edited with some 'after' shots. One way to change the world is to make cause-related films.

[alert type=alert-blue]**READ TED HOPE'S PREDICTIONS FOR THE FILM INDUSTRY IN 2015**[/alert]

12. Filmmaker as business person

I used to think that artists of any ilk were above the crassness of commerce. Then I remembered that when I worked for the sculptor Henry Moore, he paid over £2,000,000 a year in income tax – and that in 1970's dollars. Wow – that's a shrewd businessperson!

There isn't any reason why a filmmaker can't be good a business too. In fact, that's been one of the Raindance mantras since we started out in 1992. Why not hunker down with some [good business books](#) and see if you can apply classic business sense to your life as a (commercially successful) filmmaker?

With everyone moaning about the sad sad state of the independent film business, my bet is you are going see more and more filmmaker businesspeople in 2015.

One of the benefits of Raindance membership is the chance to benefit from the shared experiences of like-minded filmmakers and screenwriters. Let [David Martinez](#) know how he can make Raindance membership better.

11. Filmmaker as marketer

One of my favourite filmmakers is Roger Corman. He was truly a master of marketing, and if you ever hang around me for a bit, or attend one of my classes, I will tell you what Roger taught me when he was a special guest of Raindance back in 1997.

Want to be successful as a filmmaker? Get really good at marketing, understand the basics of social media. Get really good at building your audiences.

If you want to look at a classic textbook case of filmmaker as marketer, look at Ryan Koo's [NoFilmSchool.com](#). When you've had a good look at what he has done with his really busy website, scoot over to [John Trigonis](#), the filmmaker/marketer at Indiegogo.

10. Filmmaker as teacher

I'm eternally indebted to a handful of teachers I had coming through high school and art school in my native Toronto. The way Wyn Lawrence, my sculpture teacher (and Henry Moore's ex

technician), showed me the basics of line and form have remained with me to this day. In fact, it informs how I teach others.

Sharing knowledge is the most important thing we mere mortals do. There's no nobler profession than that of teacher. Filmmakers who know how to make great visual presentations will always get work. Like the creators of the [Royal Society of Arts animate series](#). Or John Hess of Filmmaker IQ's great [film training videos](#). Or maybe you are just really good at explaining how things work by using the visual medium.

We've developed an absolutely unique and revolutionary Postgraduate Film Degree in partnership with Staffordshire University. It's the type of programme that our industry mentors wish it was available when they were starting out, so sharp and relevant it is. You can contact our Head of MA [Tiska Wiedermann](#) directly and discuss your training needs.

9. Filmmaker as prophet

One of the reasons we go to the movies is to see what the future looks like. Have you a special vision of how we might be living in the future? Did films in the near future like *Being John Malkevich*, *Fight Club* and *Her* have any affect on you? Or have films in the far future like *Interstellar* changed your opinion of life?

As we become increasingly battered by political, economic and social unrest, to say nothing of the ecological disaster that is looming, people will increasingly turn to filmmakers and their stories to learn about what might be coming next. It's why I feel the Raindance Film festival is so important – to bring thee stories to an audience freed from censorship and politics. Have you [submitted a film to Raindance](#) yet?

8. Filmmaker as pollster

Filmmakers are supposed to be creative, right?

Not any more. Here is a scary thought: that Hollywood is actually making movies-to-measure according to profile data gathered and distributed on devices such as [Yougov app](#).

Filmmakers won't come up with stories and then find an audience. Pollsters will come up with data about the consuming and story habits of target consumer groups and then find a filmmaker to make a movie to suit the profile.

By the way – want to jump one step ahead of the data crunchers and test your story out ahead of time? Download your [free copy of the Yougov app here](#).

7. Fimmaker as brand ambassador

We've had this to a degree where a famous cinematographer like Anthony Dodd Mantle will hold up a [Canon camera](#) and swear by it. This is pimping, pure and simple, and my bet is that Anthony didn't have to worry about beers for a few weeks.

What's going to start happening more and more is how filmmakers will get funding from brands if and only if the message of the film ties into the brand values. This is really an insidious form of censorship. Nonetheless, it is a funding source, and clever filmmakers will be able to dance the

dance of artistic freedom while on the tightrope of slippery corporate ethics. What are your thoughts on this?

6. Filmmaker as an augmented realist

Filmmakers have always been on technology's cutting edge. And the new one that everyone will be talking about really soon, if not already, is the role of augmented reality (AR) and movies. No longer will stories be confined to screens in cinemas.

Here are [my thoughts](#) on how AR will affect filmmakers...

5. Filmmaker and meta tagging

Gone are the days when a screenwriter simply wrote a script and a filmmaker filmed it. Meta-tagging is the new hot topic amongst filmmakers in the know.

It takes on several forms that filmmakers of the future will get really good at.

For screenwriters, using meta-tagging, as in the [new script software Scrivener](#), allows you to tag scenes by character and mood. This helps the filmmaker as they are making the film.

For filmmakers, meta-tagging is a great way to get your film higher recognition on the internet. Dave Reynolds first short was a 42 minute film called *Zomblies*, before he realised it was too long to be a short and too short to be a long. Through clever meta-tagging, he has been able to monetise his film on YouTube, where each million views is worth between \$3-5,000. See how many [views *Zomblies* has](#).

Probably the most far-reaching departure for filmmakers is how meta-tagging can be used in digital distribution. Imagine this: a typical family breakfast scene where mom reaches for the breakfast cereal. What is actually filmed is a greenscreen cereal box. This allows the distributor to sell the ad. Perhaps in America it's Quaker Oats and in Benelux it's Kellogs. Scarey stuff.

Do you have any new ideas about meta-tagging?

4. Filmmaker as artist

Ah. Movies. A blend of art and commerce.

Sometimes, however, filmmaking goes straight to art. When veteran cult filmmaker Ate de Jong directed Mark Roger's sassy message-genre *Deadly Virtues: Love.Honour.Obey*, he couldn't understand why it wasn't selling to a UK distributor despite the fact [150,000+ have seen the trailer](#).

De Jong decided to go straight for the artistic jugular and is about to embark on a deeply personal story, *Intimacy*, in which he will combine his vast commercial expertise with his artistic eye. Watch this space for more.

There will always be a place for the filmmaker as artist. Especially those able to lend their vast experience to the fine art of movie.

3. Filmmaker as Artisan

What do you prefer? Bread from a supermarket? Or bread made at a boutique bakery like my brother's [Royal Bay Bakery](#) in Victoria BC?

So too with movies. Do you like the pre-fabricated Hollywood fare? Or the homespun movies made by independent filmmakers?

As fewer and fewer studio pictures get made, employing fewer and fewer filmmakers, I predict the artisanal home made indie fare will start to become flavour-of-the-month to discerning movie goers everywhere.

2. Filmmaker as gamer

Filmmakers traditionally viewed video games like Pong with distaste. The last ten years have seen huge advances in [gaming technology](#). Most of these advances are now used by filmmakers. But this is where gamers fall down and will need to collaborate with filmmakers. It's about story.

Can you as a filmmaker incorporate the multiple story entry points gamers use? Can you create modal stories where the action branches off into different directions? What if your movie is launched as a game?

How is this all going to work? Someone somewhere is going to figure this out and do to the film industry what the advent of sound and colour did nearly a hundred years ago.

1. Filmmaker as visual communicator

When I started Raindance in 1992, a filmmaker needed to get about a million dollars. A feature film was made and distributed rather easily in today's terms. Everyone was trying to make a feature film.

I don't think this is going to work in 2015. With web series, viral content and documentaries all making their mark, the filmmakers of the future need to class themselves as multi-format visual storytellers and content providers.

What does it all mean?

There are so many prophets of independent filmmaking doom out there. We are told to look for answers to the film agencies in Europe and America. If your answer isn't there, you are advised to go to the hallowed halls of academia.

I don't think answers can be found there. I believe that the next wave of filmmaking, the next star of independent filmmaking, is most likely to be found right here. By a reader of this article. That person could be you. Can you contribute to these changes?

How have you seen your role as filmmaker change – or can you change?

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