

Example of moneyball dir. bennett miller movie review

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Movie Reviews

This 2011 sports drama follows real-life coach Billy Beane (an entertaining Brad Pitt) who decides to take a different approach to assembling sports teams; unlike the old-school approach that divines players through straight play history, personality and likability, Beane consults Peter Brand (Jonah Hill) to come up with a new way to find good players - sabermetrics. The sabermetrics approach applied in the film is a way to objectively assess sports players and their records in baseball; with this, the only factors that matter are baseball statistics that analyze activity within baseball games. Instead of factoring in the subjective elements that many coaches and scouts use (" does he have a hot girlfriend?" " can we get endorsement deals for him?"), sabermetrics allows teams to be built around valuable but undervalued players, getting a bargain for the team as a whole by creating cheap but effective baseball players.

Sabermetrics determines the value of a player through statistics; according to this approach, batting average does not matter as much as runs. One of the basic formulas used is WHIP, which stands for 'walks and hits per inning pitched'; this measures the number of base runners a pitcher allows; the lower the number, the more valuable the pitcher is to a team. Other statistics related to sabermetrics include EqA, which involves a player's equivalent average, measuring their hitting ability by examining pitcher quality, park effects and league averages, among others, and VORP, which measures the value of a player over a replacement player. The film Moneyball manages to explore these approaches and find out how they win games, while showing how this new approach breaks conventional wisdom.

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The Social Network / dir. David Fincher

The loosely told biopic of Facebook creator Mark Zuckerberg (a suitably nervous and egocentric Jesse Eisenberg), creator of Napster Sean Parker (a charismatic Justin Timberlake) and Eduardo Saverin (a coolly intense Andrew Garfield) and their subsequent creation of the popular social networking site demonstrates the innovative strengths of social networking as a platform. Zuckerberg's approach to the website was to create the site 'Facemash,' wherein photographs were all entered into a database that Harvard students could use to rate people's attractiveness. Combining this element with the Harvard Connection dating website idea that the Winklevosses presented them with, Zuckerberg created Facebook as just a Harvard-specific website, so that an exclusive social networking site that only people in the university could use. As the site grew in popularity, however, he found that people became addicted to the prospect of always checking in with their friends and making new ones, and the resulting expansion led Facebook to what it is today.

Facebook designs its profiles with DHTML (dynamic hypertext markup language), allowing individual sections of a website or profile to be changed according to user desire - this permits people to alter their profile, change their settings and pictures, and so on. Third-party applications also permit videos to be shared, games to be played, and more - the open Facebook API (application programming interface) allows third party companies to affect the settings of Facebook. All in all, The Social Network stands tall as one of the best films of 2010, a spectacular drama that is typical of Fincher's greatness, and an interesting examination of the origins of Facebook.

Julie & Julia / dir. Nora Ephron

A mixture of a loose biopic of Julia Child's early culinary career and the attempts of a young woman working through her famous cookbook in a year. The primary vehicle for Amy Adams' storyline is the blog she creates to go through Julia Child's cookbook (and the real-life blog's popularity was the thing that led to the creation of the movie). Basically, she would make a new detailed post every day, describing her cooking process and how it went. This film shows the advantages of blog posting; it allows for a serialized, follow-able and marketable way for regular people to publish their material, whether it is just their thoughts or their own personal cookbook/diary. Formats like WordPress, Java, HTML and CSS are most often used to create blogs, and RSS feeds are created to allow people to follow new blog entries on aggregate sites and programs like the now-defunct Google Reader. In the film, the blog takes off because of its universal appeal to people who do not have a lot of experience with cooking, and who want it to be tied in with a more personal element (which is what blogs provide - a more direct connection with the author of the material). This deals directly with the concept of interlinking, in which bloggers look at other blogs and blog about those; this allows for a website or blog to go viral, as more and more people become exposed to it through this expanding network of visitors. In essence, *Julie & Julia* presents the advantages of the blog format; Julie's blog offers a personal diary and a detailed cookbook one can access at any time, with a relatable author behind it.