# Films on Demand

## Streaming Educational Videos

26 April 2017

*The Films on Demand Master Academic Collection offers a variety of segments and full length videos that cover the major academic disciplines. With about 85% of the videos available with closed captioning and easy LTI integration into Canvas and other learning management systems, Films on Demand is very popular both with librarians and faculty.*

## Method

- One librarian spent about 15 hours test driving the Films on Demand (FOD) platform and reviewing input gathered from California community college librarians through an informal survey on streaming video products conducted by this body, and by asking questions of our FOD representative.

## Preview

- Content

The Master Academic Collection is comprised of Film on Demand's twenty five academic collections. The collection contains over 24,000 titles and 267,000 segmented clips broken down into over 800 different categories.

The collection is comprised of the videos from the Health and Medicine collection, the Humanities and Social Sciences collection, the Science and Mathematics collection, the Business and Economics collection, and the Archival Films and Newsreel collection. While the occasional feature film or documentary film can be found in the collection (think *Nanook of the North*), the Master Academic Collection could only be considered supplementary for a film studies program due to the small number of full-length feature films.

The films are individually selected from over 800 international producers including BBC, PBS, A&E, National Geographic, Nova, Bill Moyers, ABC, NBC and TED. Of the videos in the Master Academic Collection, Films on Demand has exclusive rights to the Arte France titles and semi-exclusive rights to certain BBC titles.

The titles and subject matter have appeal across a wide variety of community college disciplines. At this reviewer's institution, many of the most popular videos are used to help explain the core concepts of the discipline. Some of the most heavily used titles are:

- Child Development Theorists: Freud to Erikson to Spock…and Beyond
- Core Concepts in Sociology
- The Silver Screen Revolution
- Crime, Law and Enforcement: Due Process
- Birth of the Earth

- Interface

The interface of Films on Demand is basic, but workable.  A single search box is followed by carousels of recently added videos, most popular videos, monthly featured videos, as well as a browse subject section. The site is easy to navigate.

Subjects are broken down into subcategories, and many subcategories are broken down even further. The search box searches video titles, video segment titles, descriptions, and tags, but not the transcripts (the actual content), although while viewing a  video, the transcript of that individual video can be searched.

The advanced search box gives the user the option of using boolean operators, limiting the search to specific types of videos, subject categories, producers, languages, format and copyright date. It is also within the advanced search screen that the user can limit to only closed captioned videos.

The search screen results, obtained either by browsing or searching, offers a useful variety of filters, many of the same filters that were available in the advanced search screen.  Results can also be sorted by relevance, A-Z, newest, or most popular.

The tabs below the video player allow the user to find related videos, share the video (direct link, embed code, email), create a custom segment, and obtain a citation. Citations are generated by EasyBib and from a cursory glance seem to be correct, though this reviewer noted that many times APA was not an option on the Citation tab.
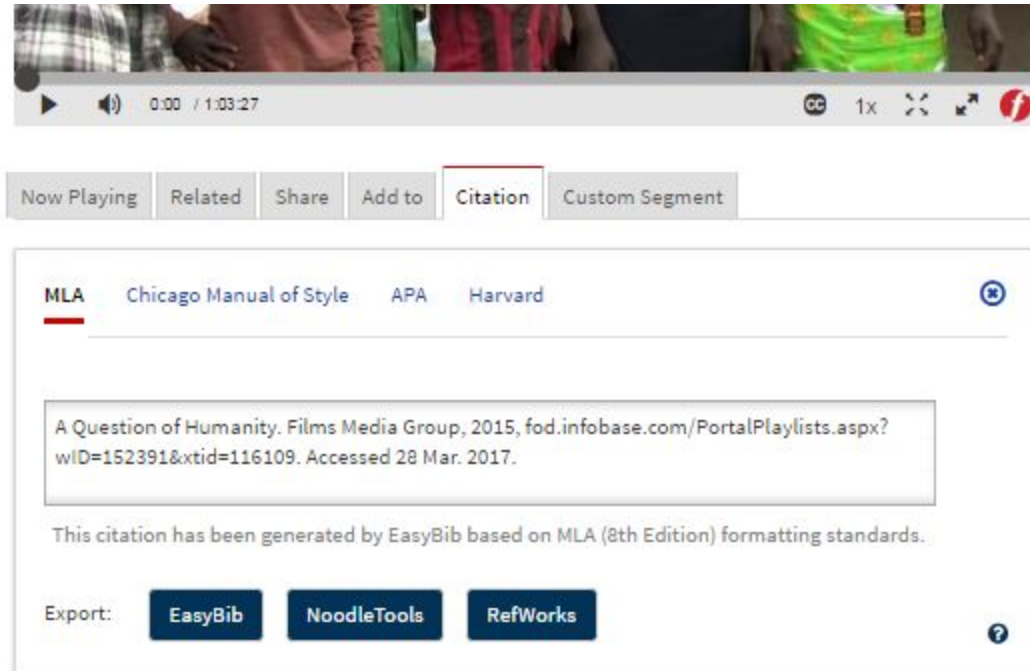


- Accessibility

Films on Demand claims to be Section 508 compliant and has a VPAT available online. While using WAVE ( the web accessibility evaluation tool) on the main landing page, this reviewer came across numerous errors; empty buttons and links, missing form labels and missing alternative text. While the website has keyboard accessibility to navigate from one area to another, there were issues when pausing or stopping a video playback.

- Features

The Master Academic Collection covers a wide variety of topics community college instructors are teaching. A title count from April 2017 shows 84% of the titles are close captioned. If an English language video is not captioned, a request can be placed to have this done. The process of having a video captioned can take anywhere from a few days to a couple of weeks, but some respondents to our survey report a longer wait. Integrating the videos within a web page or Canvas is very easy. Instructors can create their own playlists and  upload their own content to Films on Demand.

Users wanting to control the caption settings (font size, style and color) will need to create an individual account. Users can control other playback options from within their account, as well as create playlists. If no caption settings are needed, a user account really isn't necessary.

For the database administrator, a comprehensive Administrator Portal allows for detailed reporting and customization.

Title data reporting allows the administrator to run title reports, access MARC records, and view recently added titles. Some respondents to our survey had mentioned that in addition to a list of recently added titles, they would like to see a list of deselected titles. While there isn't an online list of de-selected titles on the website, a list of the most recently de-selected titles is emailed to customers about once a month.

The home page controls allow the administrator to control the platform preferences, feature specific video titles, and add announcements.

A variety of suppression tools allow the administrator to customize the content that will be viewable to the institution. Videos with objectionable content, nudity, violence, etc. can be suppressed. Videos can be suppressed by grade/age level, copyright year, producer, and individual titles can also be suppressed. Unfortunately, it is not possible to suppress all titles that lack captions.

In terms of usage statistics, several easy to use pre-made reports are available, including COUNTER. Custom reporting, with filters across a variety of areas, are also available.

Films on Demand does not have a dedicated mobile app, but the website is mobile responsive and easy to use on an Android phone.

Films on Demand states that an internet speed of at least 4 mbps is required.  The maximum streaming bitrate can be set in the administrator settings. The quality of the videos will adjust on the fly to try best match the available bandwidth. Users who create their own accounts can control the speed through their account settings. Other basic player settings include volume, closed captions, and playback speed.


● Support

Films on Demand has an impressive searchable support center with a variety of guides and video training tutorials on topics from getting started, creating playlists, loading MARC records and running reports.  Email and phone support are available 9 am to 5 pm EST, Monday through Friday.

- Cost and terms of use

  Films on Demand Master Academic Collection is offered as a subscription with cost determined by institutional FTE. Additional subject collections (Nursing, Veterinary, Physical Therapy and Allied Health) are available as add ons.  Films on Demand is more expensive than the other academic streaming video packages being compared in this review. Pricing includes unlimited simultaneous access and public performance rights.

*Other Reviews*

Sonsteby, A. (2012). Infobase Learning. Films on Demand. Library Journal, (6). 97.