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The Netflix Obsession

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Abstract

This paper investigates how long it would take an individual to watch all newly added movies and documentaries to the UK Netflix in 2017, whilst maintaining normal daily activities which include eating, sleeping and drinking. For the purposes of this investigation it was assumed the individual had no other commitments apart from watching Netflix. It was calculated that an individual would require 236.5 days to watch all newly added movies and documentaries in 2017.

Introduction

Netflix is an American entertainment company that was first founded in 1997 by Reed Hastings and Marc Randolph [1]. It initially specialised in providing streaming media and video on demand. Over the past decade it has expanded into streaming film and television. The global popularity of Netflix has exponentially increased over the past few years and currently spans across 190 countries. To date, there are over one hundred million subscribers' worldwide [2].

The most popular streaming media falls into three major categories – films, TV programmes and documentaries. Annually there is a rising volume of content available for subscribers to view, for example, in 2016, 739 movies were added to the UK Netflix library, whilst in 2017, 1399 movies were added. There is huge variance in the TV programmes that are added. They differ in the number of seasons added, the number of episodes per season and the episode lengths. In 2017, 658 TV programmes were added, the number of episodes per season ranged between 1 and 15 and the episode lengths varied between 20 minutes and 1 hour. Calculating average viewing time for these programmes hence is challenging and so TV programmes were an exclusion criteria. Documentaries are regularly added but vary in number annually e.g. in 2017, 242 were newly added compared to 275 in 2016 [3].

In order to calculate how long an individual would take to watch all newly added 2017 documentaries and movies (TV programmes excluded due to variability) to the UK Netflix library, certain assumptions need to be made. These are detailed below and include time allocations of documentaries and movies, average time for an individual's daily activities, meal consumptions and sleep patterns.

Assumptions

The first assumption is that the individual is an adult, who is based at home with unlimited internet – their only commitment is to watch Netflix and all other daily activities are taken place at a separate time.

It is assumed that the individual would drink 2 litres of fluid per day, divided into 4×500 ml portions, with each drinking break given an allocation of 10 minutes. Three 30 minute meals breaks are to be taken. A time of 15 minutes daily was assigned to bathing and washing.

A further assumption is that the individual passes urine on average 7 times a day, due a healthy person urinating anywhere from four to ten times in a day [4]. Based on this, time for urination was calculated as 7×5 minutes daily with an additional 10 minute void to pass stool.

The average British public sleeps between 5 and 7 hours per day [5, 6]. The NHS recommendation is between 7 and 8 hours [7]. Taking this in to account, 7 hours was allocated to sleep.

Compensatory rest periods that are applicable to working individuals have not been applied, as it is assumed the individual is unemployed.

In 2017, 1399 movies were added to UK Netflix [3]. For the purpose of this paper it was assumed the average movie length was 130 minutes [8].

Documentaries vary in length according to their content but for this investigation an hour's viewing time was allocated [3].

Calculation

Equation 1 was used to calculate the total time available to watch Netflix (T_n), whereby T_{24} is a 24 hours period and T_A is the total time for daily activities.

$$T_n = T_{24} - T_A \qquad (1)$$

Activity		Time (minutes)
Drinks		40
Eating		90
Bathing		15
Toileting	Urine	35
	Stool	10
Sleeping		420
Total		610 (10.16 hours)
Watching Netflix		830.4 (13.84 hours)

Table 1 – The individuals' assumed daily activities and the relative time spent on them per day as well as the remaining time available to watch Netflix.

Category	Time (hours)
Documentaries	242
Movies	3031.17
Total	*3273.17*

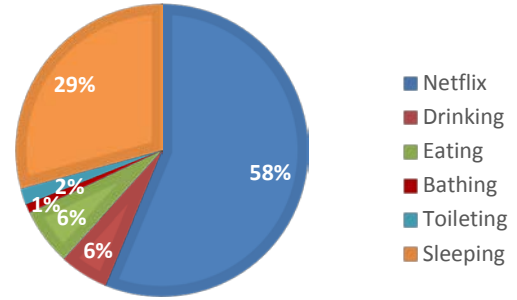Table 2 – The viewing time of all movies and documentaries that were added to Netflix in 2017.

Figure 1 – The pie chart illustrates the time (hours) spent on daily activities including Netflix.

Discussion

On an average day, 610 minutes are taken up with daily activities which equates to 10.16 hours (table 1). This leaves 13.84 hours per day to watch Netflix. The total viewing time required to watch all newly added movies and documentaries in 2017 is 3273.17 hours (table 2). With this in mind it has been calculated that it would take an individual 236.5 days to see all newly added documentaries and movies. Figure 1 shows how daily activities including Netflix would be divided over a 24 hour period. It is clear that majority of the day would be spent watching Netflix, 58 % to be exact.

This calculation is based on minimum requirements for daily activities which in reality vary significantly with individual practice. No time has been allocated for shopping which practically would be equivalent to watching one less documentary per month. The same principle applies to exercise and social activities.

Conclusion

Netflix is rapidly becoming the most popular source of home entertainment. The library content varies annually. It has been estimated that an individual watching Netflix on a daily basis would require a minimum of 236.5 days to watch all newly added movies and documentaries in 2017; whilst maintaining normal daily activities. This time equates to just under eight months.

This length of time is based on assumptions of minimal requirements that are not applicable to real life scenarios. Any individual with work and social commitments is likely to take significantly longer.

References

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