



Netflixed: The Epic Battle for America's Eyeballs

By Gina Keating



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The inside story of Netflix's incredible rise and uncertain future as master of the video universe

Netflix has come a long way since 1997, when Marc Randolph and Reed Hastings decided to start an online DVD store before most people owned a DVD player. Yet its long-term success—or even survival—is still far from guaranteed.

Journalist Gina Keating recounts the fast-paced drama of the company's turbulent rise to the top and its attempt to invent two new kinds of business. First it engaged in a grueling war against videotape behemoth Blockbuster, transforming movie rental forever. Then it jumped into an even bigger battle for online video streaming against Google, Hulu, Amazon, and the big cable companies.

Drawing on extensive interviews and her years covering Netflix as a reporter, Keating makes this tale as absorbing as it is important.

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Editorial Review

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Founded in 1997 by Marc Randolph and Reed Hastings, Netflix became one of the biggest dot-com success stories. But at the time, the idea of renting DVD movies by mail was considered a long shot, as DVD was barely an established format. Keating separates fact from legend in this story of how the tiny upstart, Netflix, took on and ultimately decimated the goliaths of the industry, Blockbuster Video and Hollywood Video. Although consumers caught on to the service and benefited from the price wars between Netflix and Blockbuster's rival online service, the companies strained under the pressure of competing at a loss to see who could outlast the other. Fans of either service will be amazed at the machinations that went on behind the scenes while they were blithely enjoying movie after movie on the industry's dime. It seems that only Apple Computer rivals Netflix in how its customers hold a deep personal attachment to the brand "experience," and fans of the service will get a lot of insight into how much risk, dedication, and commitment it took to bring that experience into being. --David Siegfried

Review

"The little red envelope that could . . . and did! This is a classic Silicon Valley start-up tale and Keating gives readers behind-the-scenes access to a story that continues to play out in America's mailboxes, living rooms, and mobile devices every day."

—JIM COOK, CFO of Mozilla; Netflix founding team member

"A well-crafted, well-researched, and well-sourced page-turner. Keating is no stranger to this subject, having covered Netflix for years as a reporter, and gives readers a fascinating and insightful look into the inner workings of a company that forever changed how America watches movies."

—LORI STREIFLER, executive editor, City News Service Inc.

"Even if all you know about Netflix is that it has bright red mailers and comes out of your Roku box, Keating's reporting will make you want to sit down and learn more. It's a tale of corporate intrigue, gigantic success, and enormous failure."

—ALLAN PARACHINI, adjunct professor, California State University; former *Los Angeles Times* reporter

"*Netflixed* has all the drama and intrigue of a Hollywood blockbuster, but for me, it was also nostalgic. Gina Keating perfectly captured the pressure, energy, and emotion we all felt as we fought Netflix for control of America's living rooms. I'm often asked by people, 'What happened at Blockbuster?' Now I can tell them . . . just read *Netflixed*."

—BEN COOPER, EVP, Camelot Strategic Marketing & Media; former head of marketing, Blockbuster Online

"...Veteran media journalist Keating's nonfiction debut is a surprisingly swift-paced mix of investigative

journalism and thrillerlike suspense. The major players in the game—Netflix CEO Reed Hastings and Blockbuster's John Antioco—are both complicated characters, and Keating does a commendable job painting a portrait of these very different business leaders, each with his own unique approach to vying for the same brass ring: domination of the American home-entertainment market ...An impressive look at the infinite complexities and cutthroat competition driving the deceptively simple business of 21st-century movie delivery.

—**Kirkus Reviews**

“There's a grim reality behind the magical wafting of DVDs to our mailboxes, according to this lively, canny business potboiler...[This] colorful narrative climaxes with Netflix and archrival Blockbuster throttling each other in an old-fashioned price war that Netflix wins by a hair. Keating hypes the allegedly world-shaking technological transformations in how we access digital content, but what's far more interesting and dramatic is her smart portrait of how an ever-changing capitalism stays very much the same.”

—**Publishers Weekly**

“Keating separates fact from legend in this story of how the tiny upstart, Netflix, took on and ultimately decimated the goliaths of the industry, Blockbuster Video and Hollywood Video... It seems that only Apple Computer rivals Netflix in how its customers hold a deep personal attachment to the brand “experience,” and fans of the service will get a lot of insight into how much risk, dedication, and commitment it took to bring that experience into being.”

—**DAVID SIEGFRIED, Booklist**

About the Author

Gina Keating was a staff reporter for Reuters and United Press International for more than a decade. Her work has appeared in *Variety*, *Southern Living*, and *Forbes*.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Lisa Bates:

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Robyn Pugh:

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Alice Weaver:

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