



Movie Industry
by Mike Masnick

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Making A High Quality Film On The Cheap With A Digital SLR

from the *and-it-looks-pretty-good* dept

A few years back at a Cato Institute conference on copyright, a guy from NBC Universal challenged me with the question of "how will we make \$200 million movies?" if content is freely shared. As I noted at the time, [that's really the wrong question](#). No one watching a movie cares about how much the movie *costs*. They just want to see a good movie. The question for a good filmmaker or producer or a studio should be "how do I make the best movie I can that will still be profitable?" Starting out with a "cost" means that you don't focus on ways to save money or contain costs. You focus on ways to spend up to those costs. That's backwards, and it's how you fail as a business.

Imagine if Dell or IBM or HP went around saying "but how can we profitably make \$5,000 computers?" It's a silly question, and it doesn't get you to focus on things like reducing costs. And, it's important to note that technology keeps making the cost of making, distributing and promoting content cheaper. No, it's still not cheap to make movies, but you can make better and better films for less and less money these days.

Jim Harper (who, it should be noted, was the guy who invited me to that Cato event in the first place), reminds us of this with a blog post jokingly entitled [How to Make a \\$200 Million Movie](#), but which actually shows how it's getting cheaper and cheaper to make a film these days. Specifically, he shows an amusing new short film from Futuristic Films, which looks pretty good and notes in the opening that the whole damn thing was shot with a Pentax K-7 DSLR, which you can find these days for around \$800 or so:

After that he shows the following "making of" video that highlights how the filmmakers were able to make such a film for very little money:

Now, no one will claim that the quality is equivalent to a \$200 million movie. But it keeps getting better and better and better... at the same time that it's getting cheaper and cheaper and cheaper. Oh, and you might recognize the filmmakers in question. They're the same folks who made the movie *Ink* and then [celebrated](#) when a copy was leaked via BitTorrent, helping the film become incredibly popular, shooting way up IMDB's movie meter, making it (for a time) one of the 20 most

popular films on the site, despite being a small indie production.

I would bet these guys aren't going around whining, "but how can we make a \$200 million movie?"