

[SEARCH BLOG](#)[FLAG BLOG](#)[FOLLOW BLOG](#)Next Blog»[sal1mineo@hotmail](mailto:sal1mineo@hotmail.com)

POPSURFING.COM

SURFING THE WAVES OF POPULAR CULTURE
BY MICHAEL GILTZ & FRIENDS

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 07, 2006

Movie Shocker: Wide Releases Are A Waste Of Money

Just off the top of my head yesterday, I suggested that if "Borat" could gross \$26 million on just 837 screens, then releasing every single darn drama and comedy on 3000 to 4000 screens was a tremendous waste of money. I had no proof of this; it just made common sense. [Now I've got the proof.](#) Variety reports on the debate over whether "Borat" left money on the table by opening on so few screens. Then they admit this:

Even though major studio films are typically released at 3,000 theaters these days, distribution execs say the wider release patterns are driven more by ego than by economics, because to book that many screens requires playing pics at a lot of little theaters that can't do a lot of business.

For instance, when "Mission: Impossible III" opened to \$47.7 million at 4,054 theaters in May, 90% of its opening grosses (or \$43 million) came from its top 1,469 engagements. That means the bottom 2,585 theaters generated a paltry \$4.8 million, an average of \$1,847 per location -- barely more than what it costs a studio to manufacture and ship a film print.

That pattern was repeated two weekends ago when "Saw III" opened to \$33.6 million at 3,167 theaters: The top 1,535 engagements generated \$30.2 million, while the other 1,632 theaters were responsible for just \$3.3 million.

"The lesson is that you don't have to have all these screens to do big business," said a studio distrib topper. Or, as another studio distrib prexy said, "It just goes to show that anything over 1,500 (theaters) is crazy."

This is unbelievable. HALF the screens set aside for "Saw III" grossed only \$3.3 million? That is unbelievable. And it seems to be true across the board. Every print a studio strikes can cost \$1200. So striking 1500 prints costs \$1.8 million. Plus there's the cost to theaters to man all those extra screenings. Plus advertising. And of course, if a movie flops, you'll be losing money by booking all those extra screens. I can't believe

FAVORITE LINKS

[Americablog](#)

[Five O'Clock Lightning baseball blog](#)

[Deep Pop -- Lori Lakin's Blog](#)

[The Back Page -- Jason Page on ESPN Radio](#)

[Cine-Blog -- George Robinson's Blog](#)

[Documents On Art & Cinema - Daryl Chin's Blog](#)

[Brucie G's Wondrous Blog Of Adventure and Mystery -- Bruce Greenspan's Blog](#)



BLOG ARCHIVE

▼ [2009 \(17\)](#)

▼ [July \(3\)](#)

[1939 -- The Greatest Year For Movies](#)

[Swimming Bans Those Hi-Tech Suits!](#)

[Best Movies Of The Year -- The Master List](#)

▶ [June \(3\)](#)

▶ [May \(1\)](#)

▶ [March \(2\)](#)

▶ [February \(1\)](#)

▶ [January \(7\)](#)

▶ [2008 \(86\)](#)

▶ [2007 \(781\)](#)

▶ [2006 \(2412\)](#)

▶ [2005 \(5\)](#)



CONTRIBUTORS

[Biboy](#)

[Michael in New York](#)

