

# Gatekeepers in the Audiovisual Sector: Regulatory and Competition-related Aspects

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# Competition and Gatekeepers

- standard economic theory: effective competition should prevent gatekeeping power
- most digital gatekeepers dominate their markets
  - Google Search Engine
  - mobile app stores: App Store and GooglePlay
  - Facebook/Instagram/WhatsApp social networks (... but TikTok?)
  - Amazon Marketplace (... but what exactly is dominance?)
- Video on Demand (VoD) → lots of competition ...

# Competition in the VoD Market

- Video on Demand (VoD) → lots of competition ...
  - ... between S-VoD services (Netflix, AmazonPrime, Disney+, Hulu, Joyn, DAZN, HBO Max, etc. pp.)
  - ... with A-VoD services (like Google's YouTube) (*empirical evidence: Budzinski et al. 2020*)
  - ... with “linear” television.
- *So, no gatekeeper issues here?*

# Potential Competition Problems in the VoD Market

- Elements of Gatekeeper Effects in VoD?
  - network effects (platforms)?
  - data-based business models and advantages of size?
  - one-stop shopping and the burden of managing multiple subscriptions
  - vertical integration (At&T Time Warner, Disney, upstream endeavors of Netflix and co, etc.)

# VoD Gatekeepers

- Gatekeeper Effects in VoD
- The combination of vertical integration and algorithmic search and recommendation systems may lead to
  - ... foreclosure (no access for fringe content producers, etc.)
  - ... self-preferencing (steering the audience towards own/related contents)
- modern economic theory
  - “traditional” market dominance not necessary; size is sufficient!
  - ORAM: outstanding relevance across markets (within an ecosystem) sufficient!
- *Conclusion: Big and vertically integrated players can be gatekeepers without dominating the market!*

# Research

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