

MONSTER MASH FILM FESTIVAL

Celebrating the monsters who shaped horror

Introduction

For this module we have been asked to research and plan a film festival. This document will outline a plan for a hypothetical festival focusing on Universal Monsters. The working title is Monster Mash Film Festival.

When considering a concept for this festival, I began by thinking about the kind of event I would personally like to attend. In my opinion, a lot of new horror films feel like recycled ideas from older films. I wanted to focus on some of the source material these newer films could be inspired by. There are many film festivals focusing on new and upcoming films, I wanted to use this opportunity to celebrate older films which are not as easily accessible on streaming platforms. When researching the availability of the Universal Monsters films, none of them were easily available to stream for free or included for free with any premium streaming services.

Concept

The proposed concept for this film festival is to hold an event focusing on celebrating the Universal Monsters movies from the 1930s-1950s. Many of these stories are still being retold today, however, in my opinion, few are as captivating as the films from the original Universal Monsters era. When researching the idea, I found no other events in the UK purely focusing on these films, indicating a potential gap in the market.

The concept of a Universal Monsters film festival allows for a lot of creativity in the execution, with much potential for an immersive event experience. The event could be an opportunity to transport attendees back in time to the original screening era. I want to create an opportunity for attendees to immerse themselves in a world of horror and monsters.

This event would serve as a beta test for a larger scale event, which could be held at a larger venue. A larger event would allow for more films to be held, as well as an opportunity for independent filmmakers to submit theme appropriate films for screening.

Research

A History of Universal Monsters

Universal Pictures, founded in California in 1912, is one of Hollywood's "Big Six" film studios (Universal Pictures, 2013). Whilst, supernatural themes had been present in film since the 1890's, Universal did not delve into the horror genre until 1923, with the release of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (University of Southern California, 2020). The studio's Universal Monsters era began with *Dracula* (1931). Whilst The Great Depression had caused many studios to close, with cinema audiences shrinking by a third from 1930 to 1933, *Dracula*, and later *Frankenstein* (1931) were said to have saved the studio with their box office success (Swanson, no date). These films were followed by *The Mummy* (1932), *The Invisible Man* (1933), *The Bride of Frankenstein* (1935) and *The Wolf Man* (1941), all of which performed well at cinemas (Swanson, no date). The 1940s brought the "Monster Mash" era, with pictures such as *Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man* (1943) and *House of Frankenstein* (1944) (Machell, 2017). A comedic edge was added in 1945 with the first of the Abbott and Costello monster adventures with *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein* (1945), which featured not only Frankenstein's Monster, but also Dracula and The Wolf Man. They would go on to meet *The Invisible Man* in 1951, *The Creature from the Black Lagoon* in 1954 and *The Mummy* in 1955 (O'Brien, 2019).

The Universal Monsters have continued to influence filmmakers over the decades, with multiple reboots such as the Hammer Horror films from the 1950s-70s. These films included characters such as Dracula, Frankenstein's Monster, The Mummy and The Wolf Man, although neither The Invisible Man nor The Creature from the Black Lagoon were revived (Meenan, 2021). The characters have continued to appear on screen in various standalone films, including as *Van Helsing* (2004), *The Mummy* (2017) and *Renfield* (2023) to varied success.

Whilst I could not find a statistic specifically relating to the UK, according to Gitnux, 32% of Americans prefer classic horror movies, as opposed to 21% preferring newer releases and 48% having no preference. This suggests that fans are more likely to watch old horrors than new ones (Gitnux, 2023). The same article states that "horror movie creation has rapidly increased, indicating a spiritual degradation of society and increased negativity", suggesting the state of society is being reflected in the films people choose to create. This has been seen throughout history. For example, Germany's Weimar Cinema was born out of the despair following the First World War, the Universal Monsters followed America's Great Depression and Sci-Fi films, such as *War of the Worlds*, followed fears relating to nuclear bombs (Trove Studio, 2018). It could be said that horror films are used as a way to process challenging world events.

The Survey

In order to gain a level of understanding as to whether there would be any interest in a Universal Monsters themed film festival, I created a 13 question survey. I then invited my Instagram followers to complete it anonymously. I chose to distribute it in this way as I have approximately 13,000 followers and wanted to reach the broadest audience possible.

The survey comprised of the following questions:

1. Which film genres do you enjoy? (Select all which apply) (13 genres)
2. Interest in black and white films (Likert scale)
 - I enjoy watching black and white films
 - I would be less likely to watch a film if it were in black and white
 - I find black and white films boring
 - I think black and white films are eye-catching
 - I think black and white films are immersive
 - I would like more festivals to feature black and white films
 - I would attend an event featuring black and white films
3. Explain why you do or don't enjoy black and white films
4. Are you familiar with the Universal Monsters films?
5. Would you attend a film festival showcasing Universal Monster films?
6. Have you seen any of the following films? (Select all which apply) (list of 17 films*)
7. Are there any films not included on this list which you would expect to see at a Universal Monsters film festival?
8. What other activities would you like to see available at a Universal Monsters film festival?
9. How many days would you expect a film festival to run for?
10. How many films a day would you expect to see at a film festival?
11. What is the maximum you would be willing to pay to attend a horror film festival (per day)?
12. What is your age?
13. What best describes your gender?

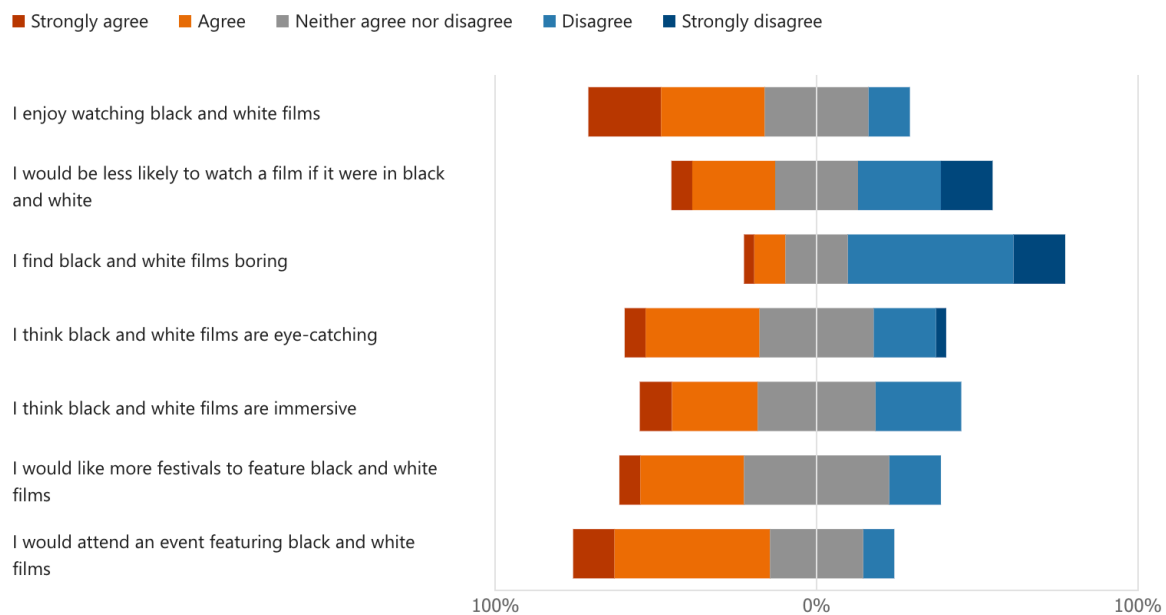
From analysing the data, I found that the most popular genres were Thriller (22/32), Action (20/32) and Horror (20/32). The least popular genres were Romance (1/32) and Romantic Comedy (3/32). This is an unsurprising result as 88% of respondents were male, 78% of which were aged 25-44. This finding is consistent with studies examining genre preferences between genders (although these studies do not account for non-binary people) (Dolan, 2017). Whilst the sample is unfortunately unbalanced, it is reflective of my Instagram demographics.

The main purpose of the survey was to gauge whether there would be an interest in an event of this nature. The data revealed that there was a 55% positive attitude towards black and white films, with long answers featuring responses such as “[I have] Never really been drawn to them.

But I will watch them if it's particularly interesting or recommended.”, *“I don't really have a preference either way I think I just subconsciously associate it with poor special effects and more outdated world views”* and *“I like films that have been colourised so we can see both versions”*. To summarise, on most responses to question 2, around 50% were in favour of black and white films, and around 30% were indifferent. This would indicate that attendees would attend and event featuring black and white films, but not focusing on them. A mixture of black and white and colour films would be ideal.

2. Interest in black and white films

[More Details](#)



Survey - Interest in Black and White Films

I also asked questions relating to the duration of the event and how much attendees would be willing to pay. 68% of respondents said they would expect the event to run for 1-2 days, and 68% said they would expect to see 3-4 films a day. 48% said they would be willing to pay £30-£40.

In summary, my survey data would indicate that respondents would be most likely to attend an event with a picture of black and white and colour films, lasting 1-2 days, with 3-4 films a day, costing £30-£40. It would be worth considering whether to feature hybrid-genre films, given the interest in not only Horror, but also Thriller, Action, Sci-Fi and Fantasy.

If I were to repeat the survey, I would like to have a larger survey size with a more even distribution across with gender spectrum, with a broader range of ages. I could also consider a follow-up survey focusing on which films from the proposed list they would be most likely to watch, and what other types of films they would like to see included.

Although my survey suggests to diversify the film selection, I would still like to test a small event focusing purely on the black and white Universal Monsters films. I think that if the marketing were to be executed carefully with targeted ads, there would still be an audience for an event of this nature. If I were to hold a larger-scale event, with more screening rooms and over more days, I would like to offer a more diverse selection of films and include an opportunity for independent submissions.

Case Studies

Film Festivals

As part of my research, I have explored existing horror film festivals. The first event I will focus on is the Famous Monsters FilmFest. This event is the closest I have found to the type of event I would intend to hold. Held at the historic Chinese Theatre in Hollywood, this 2023 festival was a collaboration between magazine *Famous Monsters of Filmland* and horror convention Monsterpalooza, held to “celebrate 65 years of Monstrous Magnificence” (Famous Monsters, 2023). *Famous Monsters of Filmland* was a horror film magazine dating from 1958 to 1983, with 191 publications (Wikipedia, 2024). Whilst it is difficult to find information relating to its origins outside of Wikipedia due to references being archived, by viewing full issues online, it appears the magazine featured interviews with actors, filmmakers, film reviews and analysis and a record and movie catalogue (Famous Monsters, no date).

Monsterpalooza is a horror convention which has been running since 2008. It features the Monsterpalooza Museum, which exhibits full-sized creatures, sculptures, and props and animatronics which have been seen on screen (Eventbrite, 2024). There are also vander stalls, SFX makeup masterclasses and photo ops with actors, such as Doug Bradley (Monsterpalooza, 2024).

The Famous Monsters FilmFest was a 3 day film festival featuring *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Frankenstein*, *The Creature from the Black Lagoon*, *Dracula*, *The Bride of Frankenstein*, *The Mummy*, *The Wolf Man*, *The Invisible Man*, *Dracula* (Spanish version), *Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man*, *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *Revenge of the Creature*. Some films are introduced by special guests, such as *The Creature from the Black Lagoon* being introduced by John Landis and *Dracula* being introduced by Juliet Landau (Melanson, 2023). The event also featured restored Max Fleischer cartoons before each screening (Famous Monsters, 2023).

This is an event I would have very much liked to attend. It not only paid tribute to the classic films and magazines, but also brought in more current special guests who frequently engage with

conventions and other horror-related events. Juliet Landau, for example, is still frequently seen at many events, especially those relating to Buffy the Vampire Slayer (RosterCon, 2024). By including these special guests, it could potentially attract more guests to attend the event.

The second event I will discuss is Forbidden Worlds Film Festival, “Bristol’s biggest repertory genre film festival” (Forbidden Worlds Film Festival, 2024). Launched in 2022, this festival is “dedicated to screening repertory fantasy, action, science-fiction and horror films from around the world and celebrating the people that made them” (Forbidden Worlds Film Festival, 2024). Created by Bristol-based film enthusiasts, the organisers celebrate their appreciation for classic and obscure films by screening them at the former IMAX screen at The Bristol Aquarium Cinema (Forbidden Worlds Film Festival, 2024). Many of the films are introduced on screen by actors, directors and other film industry creatives, such as Jamie Lee Curtis for *Halloween* (1972) and Matt Winston (Stan Winston’s son) for *Pumpkinhead* (1988). Since the first Forbidden Worlds event, there have been two events a year, one in May and The Big Scream events in October. The length of the festival has varied between 2 and 5 days, with 3 to 5 films per day. Screenings so far have featured *Poltergeist* (1982), *Basketcase* (1982) and *Bladerunner* (1982), as well as a wide variety of other classic films within the fantasy, sci-fi and horror genres. As well as classic films, the festivals also provides a short film submission opportunity with their Genre Filmmakers of the Future: Short Film Showcase.

Day passes range from £15 to £35 with full festival passes costing £110 (prices based on the spring 2024 event) (Forbidden Worlds Film Festival, 2024).

Immersive Cinema

Whilst conducting research for this project, I have also looked into ways of making my event more immersive. This is a concept what has gained popularity in theatre in recent years. Immersive theatre aims to take audiences from passive observers to active participants (Woltmann, 2023). It’s been used in a variety of genres including drama, comedy and tragedy, According to Woltmann (2023), techniques include putting the audience in the same location as the performance, for example, instead of the audience watching performers on a stage, they are in a shared space, such as a nightclub or a warehouse. There is often a sensory aspect, involving room temperature, coloured lights and scents, with which participants are encouraged to interact.

The aim is to destabilise the relationship between the audience and the performers (Woltmann, 2023). This concept has also been applied to cinema. One such company, CineShow, a Northern England-based company, has truly brought immersive cinema to life with screenings such as *Jaws* (1978) (CineShow, 2021). This event involved the audience watching the film from a swimming pool, whilst actors reenacted scenes from the show, such as shark attacks, as they were shown on screen (CineShow, 2021). They also held an event focusing on *The Shining* (1980), for which the organisers recreated The Overlook Hotel within the Grimsby Central Hall. Attendees had the opportunity to dance, witness character Jack Torrance attack his wife Wendy, as well as

being spooked by hidden monsters as they explored the venue (CineShow, 2022). CineShow's mission is to bring an immersive, interactive cinema opportunity to those outside of London. They are also looking to build career opportunities for local SFX artists, costume designers, videographers and many more, without having to train in London (CineShow, 2021).

Another such event is Secret Cinema. Founded in 2007, this London-based immersive theatre company which utilises unique venues for their immersive shows (Thomas, 2022). With events held all over the world, Secret Cinema gives attendees the opportunity to step into their favourite stories and get lost in another world. Their events live up to their name, with the locations of their events being kept secret until the day is nearly upon the ticket holders (Thomas, 2022). Prior to the event, audience members are given a character to build online, transforming them into an active participant. They then attend a venue, frequently a warehouse which has been transformed into a film set, in which they are encouraged to involve themselves in the plot (Garvan, 2018). When speaking on Secret Cinema, founder Fabien Riggall states that the idea was born out of his childhood desire to "live inside the film". He goes on to say that "the 'secret' aspect of the idea 'came from the rise of digital culture... Everyone was getting into being online all of the time. The idea of being offline and it being a secret was really important to us.'" Garvan, 2018). So far, Secret Cinema have held over 60 events, including *Bladerunner*, *Guardians of the Galaxy* and *Grease*.

Key Planning

Aesthetics

After researching other events and immersive cinema, I am keen to create an event which will transport attendees back in time to a 1930s world of horror and monsters. The staff would be dressed authentically as people from the 1930s and the venue would be dressed in the same aesthetic. During screenings, I would have hired actors dressed as monsters from the featured films creeping around the room at key moments in the film. For example, as Dracula is first seen on the staircase in the film, he would appear at the back of the theatre room and lurk behind unsuspecting viewers. I would also have actors dressed as The Bride of Frankenstein and The Invisible Man. These characters would be painted in black and white, as if they had stepped straight out of the screen. Although I have not been able to find a reference for this online, when visiting Universal Studios in LA I have seen actors painted in a similar way roaming the park.

I intend to hold the event at The Dylan Thomas Centre in Swansea. With a seating capacity of 110 in the theatre room, a large hall suitable for vendors and a photo spot, and a cafe and bar (Conferences UK, no date), the venue suits the event's needs perfectly. As the building at its current size dates back to 1852 (Dylan Thomas Centre, 2024), its exterior and architecture would be complimentary to this idea. I would consider featuring the kind of food and drinks that would

have been available at the cinema in the 1930s, such as popcorn in paper bags and vintage sweets (Daniel, 2019) as well as meals and drinks with monster themed names in the cafe.

The event would also feature a photo set where attendees could have their picture taken with actors dressed as Dracula or The Bride of Frankenstein. Another set could include a large glass bell jar, similar to that in *The Bride of Frankenstein* in which small characters are seen within jars. As this set could be a challenge to build, I could have a basic set with a photoshop template pre-made to place people in the jars.

As the Dylan Thomas Centre has a large hall on the same floor as the lecture theatre I intend to use as a cinema room, there is ample space for merchandising stands, which could feature monster masks, apparel and home accessories, such as drinks glasses. This would give small vendors an opportunity to sell niche items which would only usually be available online or at specialised events, such as horror conventions.

As The Dylan Thomas Centre has an exhibition section, this could be transformed into a mini monster museum, where attendees could learn all about the history of Universal Studios, its monsters and the legacy they have created. This would also be an ideal spot for a guest lecture to give a talk on the subject.

Insurance and Licensing

When holding an event, such as a festival, many forms of insurance are necessary. Public Liability Insurance will cover things like accidental injury to attendees, and Equipment Insurance will cover any damage to equipment (McEntee, 2023). However, these are not the only forms of insurance potentially needed for a film festival. When hiring staff, such as the actors I would be hiring for Monster Mash, Employers Liability Insurance would be needed to cover any staff injuries whilst at work (McEntee, 2023). Cancellation Insurance (to cover a last minute event cancellation) and Professional Indemnity Insurance (to cover ticketed events that have not met expectations) could also be worth considering (McEntee, 2023).

In order to show a film in a public setting, regardless of whether it is a ticketed event, you need a Single Title MPLC Movie Licence (Independent (MPLC, no date). MPLC represent many studios, such as Universal, Disney and Paramount, and their license will allow you to show films in a non-theatrical setting (MPLC, no date).

However, as I would be holding the event at a University building, the licensing would be covered by a Public Video Screening Licence (PVSL) (Centre for Education & Finance Management, no date). If the event were to be run in partnership with the University, it may be possible to utilise their existing insurance policies.

Budgeting

When working out a budget for the event, I based the figures on what I could find on the internet, other than makeup, which I based on what I would charge personally as a freelance makeup artist (£30 per person). If the event were to be held in collaboration with the University, staffing, catering and insurance costs could be covered by the University. When hiring the Dylan Thomas Centre, catering is included in the hire cost.

When looking for costumes to hire, I had difficulty finding anything suitable. However, I did find suitable costumes available to purchase for between £34.99 and £44.99 (see table 3). I found details for actor day rates at The Casting Collective, where the advised day rate per actor was £105.04 (The Casting Collective, no date). I found a list of potential public speakers knowledgeable on the topic of film history at Public Speakers Corner, with rates ranging from £75 to £150 per talk (Public Speakers Corner, no date). I would aim to have a speaker appear on both days. If I were to order 100 zines, 100 flyers and 10 A3 posters at Solopress (see table 3), it would cost £81.21. This would bring the cost to £1821.69.

I would intend to make space for 10 vendor tables in the 200 person capacity hall at the venue, charging £15 per table. For pictures with actors, I would charge £10 per person, per actor for a print and digital copy. If tickets to the event cost £30 each, all vendor slots were filled and a quarter of attendees chose to have their picture taken, the event could gross £3725.

From my research, it appears there is no set cost for how much it would boost a post on social media, you can spend as much as you like and the reach will be reflected in how much you choose to spend. However, according to Expert Market (Barraclough, 2023) you can choose to pay per ad click, which on Facebook could be an average of £0.86 with users spending an average of £150 to £1300 per month. You could still reach over 1000 people with a £5 spend. Instagram is more expensive, costing users £3.15 per click with an average monthly spend of £150 to £1300 per month (Barraclough, 2023). With a potential for a profit of £1,903.31, this would allow for a moderate social media advertising budget. As the event is at a small capacity venue with 110 available tickets, I would estimate that spending £500 on advertising could be beneficial. This would make the total expenses come to £2,321.69.

Whilst I have estimated these figures to the best of my ability, I have not yet been able to find pricing for historically accurate usher uniforms. I was also unable to find the dimensions of the rooms at The Dylan Thomas Centre to calculate set dressing costs.

Table 1

Expenses	Cost per day (£)
Staff	0

Expenses	Cost per day (£)
Actors x 3	315.12
Costumes	115.47
Makeup x 3	120
Catering	0
Insurance	0
Flyers/posters/zine	81.21
Total (for 2 days)	1821.69

Table 2

Income	Per person (£)
Tickets	30
Vendor table	15
Photo	10
Total	3,725

Table 3

Item	Cost (£)
Dracula costume (fancydress.com)	33.99
Bride of Frankenstein costume (Smiffys)	34.49
Invisible Man costume (fancydress.com)	44.99
Zine (x100)	39.51
Flyers (x100)	22.50
Posters (x10)	19.20

The Films

When first designing the event, I wanted the event to showcase as many films as possible, taking place over 4 days. The films I originally wanted to show were:

- *Dracula* (1931)
- *Frankenstein* (1931)

- *The Mummy* (1932)
- *The Invisible Man* (1933)
- *Bride of Frankenstein* (1935)
- *The Wolf Man* (1941)
- *The Creature from the Black Lagoon* (1954)
- *Son of Frankenstein* (1939)
- *Ghost of Frankenstein* (1942)
- *Frankenstein meets the Wolf Man* (1942)
- *House of Frankenstein* (1944)
- *House of Dracula* (1945)
- *Abbott and Costello meet Frankenstein* (1948)
- *Abbott and Costello Meet the Killer, Boris Karloff* (1949)
- *Abbott and Costello Meet the Invisible Man* (1951)
- *Abbott and Costello Meet Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1953)
- *Abbott and Costello Meet the Mummy* (1955)

Other films suggested by survey respondents were *The Phantom of the Opera* (1925) and *The Mummy's Hand* (1940).

However, after collecting data from my surveys, the majority of respondents voted for a 1-2 day festival with 3-4 films per day. After reviewing the shortlisted films, I have narrowed down the list to:

Day 1

- *Dracula* (1931)
- *The Mummy* (1932)
- *The Invisible Man* (1933)
- *The Creature from the Black Lagoon* (1954)

Day 2

- *The Wolf Man* (1941)
- *Frankenstein* (1931)
- *Bride of Frankenstein* (1935)
- *Son of Frankenstein* (1939)

Whilst it would have been nice to show all of the films included on the original list, after reviewing them all, I chose to focus on the films that gave each monster their own moment, as well as *Son of Frankenstein* as I found it too enjoyable to leave out. If I were to hold the festival at a larger scale in the future, I could consider featuring the full list.

Branding

When choosing the aesthetic for the branding, I wanted to stay true to the theme. All Elements are in black and white and feature characters from the featured films. Instead of designing a complex logo I decided to use text; “Monster Mash Film Festival” in white Curse of the Zombie font, with a stroke, inner shadow and drop shadow to add texture. I found using a white font with texture and a drop shadow stood out well against both black and white backgrounds. The font I chose is stylistic enough to be interesting and eye-catching, without being too complex to read. Social media posts would share a visual style with the zine artwork, featuring monsters and serif font on torn paper assets.



Monster Mash Film Festival Logo

Social Media Strategy

When promoting an event it is best to start planning the marketing strategy as far ahead of the event as possible, several months or perhaps a year in advance (Meyer, 2023). Utilising social media is an essential element to gain an interest and an audience (Rogers, 2018). Not only can you create targeted ads and posts to reach your desired audience, you can also create polls, challenges and other methods to increase engagement on your posts (LinkedIn, 2023). With a large variety of platforms, there is plenty of opportunity to promote your event on apps such as Facebook, Instagram, X, TikTok, YouTube, as well as event promotion sites such as Eventbrite and Evvnt. As Facebook is the largest social media platform, with over 3 billion users in 2024 (Bernhardt, 2024), using its events feature is an essential tool. This is particularly useful as not only can you track who is planning to attend, you can also leverage the Facebook algorithm to target your desired audience and their friends (Eventbrite Blog, 2023). A Facebook event page or group would also be a useful tool for collecting photos and videos after the event.

Another useful strategy is to create a hashtag for your event. These are widely used on X, Instagram, Facebook and TikTok, and can be used as a form of search engine when used on a post, as well as increasing the reach of your post (O'Brien, 2023). When creating your hashtag, it is important to keep it clear, simple and easy to remember, such as #MonsterMashFilmFest2024 (using camel case makes them more clear and accessible to read) (O'Brien, 2023). Not only does creating a hashtag put the name of your event out there and encourage attendees to post, it can also serve as a way to collect content for promotion. It is also useful to search hashtags used by competitors. For example, when I searched “horror festival” on Instagram, the first result was for Abertoir Horror Festival, an Aberystwyth based horror film festival. This indicates that if I used that hashtag I would be more likely to reach a similar audience to Abertoir.



Example Instagram Post

When promoting Monster Mash Film Festival on social media, I would not only post content specifically about the event, such as a poster or promotional video, I would also create posts to encourage interaction to boost the post in the social media algorithm. This could be something like a “best recreation” competition, where attendees could recreate a makeup look or costume from one of the featured films, with the prize being free merchandise or a free photo op with an actor dressed as a film character. I could also create polls to gauge interest in additional activities to have available at the event.

Influencer marketing is also used frequently to reach a wider audience. When choosing someone to partner with, it is important to consider whether they have a large and loyal enough following and whether their audience would be interested in your event (Meyer, 2023). I could also explore opportunities to guest on a popular podcast in a relevant genre (Akbar, 2022).

The Zine

Zines are a form of fan magazine and usually have a distinctive DIY aesthetic (Publuu, 2022). They can be dated back as far as the 1930s, with a Chicago science club publication called *The Comet*. Early zines were copied using a mimeograph, also known as a stencil duplicator (Kero 2021). Mimeographs were simple to use and easy to come by, which made them popular with independent writers for small publications (Weber, 2016). Early zines were often handwritten or written with a typewriter onto a mimeograph template, with hand drawn illustrations. These templates were usually single-sided sheets of paper which would then be folded to create an “accordion zine” (Publuu, 2022). The copy process has changed over time, with the creation of Xeroxing in 1949 (Kero, 2021), although colour copies were not commercially available until 1968 when 3M released the Colour in Colour copier (photocopierleasing.co.uk, no date). Zines became popular within communities such as sci-fi fan groups or LGBTQ+ groups, and later within the punk scene (Kero, 2021).

As zines have long been popular within fan groups, I thought it would be fun to make a Universal Monsters zine as a souvenir for attendees of Monster Mash Film Festival. This would not only be a nice addition to the event, but also be used as publicity for the event. It could be shared online as a form of advertisement. It features artwork, the schedule for the festival and fun facts relating to Universal Monsters.

When creating the zine, I wanted to pay tribute the the traditional “cut and paste” aesthetic of the original zines. Although mine was created in photoshop, I used torn paper assets with a typewriter-style serif font, as well as masked out characters from the featured films. I wanted the elements to look like they had been placed haphazardly on the page. I used a black background with a textured layer to create the appearance of the paper having been photocopied several times. I kept the colour theme monochromatic to not only fit the look of a cheaply photocopied document, but to compliment the black and white films. This zine is an 8 page booklet including the film schedules, fun facts about the films and other useful information, such as other available activities at the event. The zine can be viewed at <https://online.fliphtml5.com/gxtkg/gzom/>



Monster Mash Film Festival Poster

Evaluation

Future Endeavours

If this small scale event were to be successful, I would aim to hold an expanded version at a larger venue. This would ideally be at a venue with at least two screens - one for feature-length films and one for shorts. Chapter in Cardiff could be a potentially ideal location. With one screening room featuring 185 seats, and a second room with 50 seats, as well as professional projection equipment and further spaces for activities and catering, Chapter would be the perfect venue to expand upon the event (Chapter, 2024). Cardiff could potentially be a better location than Swansea as it has better transport links and more entertainment options around the city.

For a future event, I could consider adjusting the theme, perhaps doing a “Universal vs Hammer Horror” film festival, with an option for submitted shorts. This could focus on films featuring Dracula, Frankenstein’s Monster, The Mummy, The Phantom of the Opera and Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

Concluding Remarks

Whilst the concept of the Monster Mash Film Festival would appeal to a niche market, I think that with the right targeted advertising and an opportunity for an immersive experience, this idea would be a success. The size of the venue would also meet the requirements of a smaller audience. From my market research, it appears there is enough of an interested audience to have a productive outcome. As there is nothing similar currently running in the UK, there would be little competition. If the event were to be popular enough, there is plenty of potential for an upscaled sequel.

References

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