

Digital cinema

New technology can significantly reduce the costs of printing and distributing films. Will this affect film production in the future?

- 1 Discuss the following questions with a partner.
 - a Are you a regular film-goer or do you prefer to wait for the DVD / video release?
 - b Which was the last film you saw at the cinema?
- 2 Complete the sentences by choosing the correct figure in **bold**. Compare your answers with a partner.
 - a The percentage of films made on celluloid is **75%** / 90% / 99%.
 - b Each copy of a film on celluloid costs **\$10** / \$100 / \$1,000.
 - c In Brazil, there is a cinema screen for every **10,000** / 100,000 / 1,000,000 people.
- 3 Now read the article and check your answers in exercise 2.

Rain Networks

Cinema today is about making big profits, not only from the original release of a film but also from the sales and renting of DVDs and videos. The first two parts of the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, for example, have already generated huge returns, with over \$1.7 billion in global ticket sales. However, film producers take big risks and the investment in making a film is high. The trilogy cost over \$300 million to make. Ninety-nine per cent of films shown in cinemas are in 35mm print format and making each copy of a film on celluloid costs at least \$1,000. Added to this is the high cost of distributing the film to each cinema.

Rain Networks is a company set up by Fábio Lima and based in São Paulo, Brazil. It has developed a system called KinoCast, which downloads films into cinemas via satellite and then controls the projection of the

film. This saves on distribution costs and involves no printing and transportation costs at all. The system is ideal for a large country like Brazil which has a low number of cinemas per capita. In Brazil there is a cinema screen for every 100,000 people, compared to Mexico, for example, where there is one for every 35,000 people. Plans to install the new system on 100 art house cinemas would give Brazil the largest digital cinema network in the world.

There are a number of similar products on the market, and enthusiasts of digital cinema speak about the high picture and sound quality. The film industry itself is nervous about the quality and affordability of digital film distribution. On the other hand, digital distribution would mean that smaller film-makers would be able to overcome the current financial barriers – and produce films to compete with the blockbusters.

- 4 Find words in the article which mean:
 - a produced something, caused something to exist (paragraph 1)
 - b to move information to your computer from a computer system or from the Internet (paragraph 2)
 - c the process of supplying goods from one central place (paragraphs 2 and 3)
 - d the idea that something is cheap enough for people to buy (paragraph 3)
 - e something that prevents progress or makes it difficult for people to achieve an aim (paragraph 3)
 - f a very successful film, show, or novel (paragraph 3)

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- 5 Discuss the following questions in small groups and report your ideas to the class.
 - a Do you think that digital cinema will become more popular?
 - b Do you think that DVD sales will continue to rise?
 - c Would you prefer it if there were fewer blockbusters and more independent films?