

Screen Machine

Audience Survey 2009 Report



Analysed and Written by Sian Jamieson (HI-Arts)
Regional Screen Scotland contributors: Graham Campbell & Ron Inglis

Regional
Screen
Scotland

Introduction

Background

Screen Machine is a unique cinema in the UK. It provides a comfortable, modern cinema environment screening new release films to audiences in some of the most remote and cinema-deprived communities in Scotland. The auditorium is air conditioned and the standard of seating and technical presentation is equal to a good modern independent cinema.

The mobile cinema tours the west of Scotland and the islands visiting approximately 22 locations 5-6 times per year. Each tour consists of two or three new release films accompanied.

The visits of Screen Machine to each community are promoted through emails, the Screen Machine web site, and by A4 and A3 posters displayed in local shops, schools and community centres. Tickets can be purchase on-line or on the door.

The Screen Machine earns over half its income from ticket sales and a further one-third of turnover is provided by grant aid from Scottish Screen and Highlands & Islands Enterprise. Sponsorship (currently from the Royal Bank of Scotland), advertising and hires of the cinema accounts for the remaining income.

The audience survey

In Autumn 2009 we contacted the 3,886 individuals on the Screen Machine email list and invited them to take part in an on-line survey. A prize draw offered 10 pairs of free tickets to Screen Machine. 21% of the individuals contacted took part – a gratifyingly high response rate which has provided us with a wealth of valuable information which will help guide the service in the future.

This report summarises the main data and a selection of the many comments we received. A full report (66 pages plus a 45 page appendix with all the comments submitted) is available on request from: info@regionalscreenscotland.org.

Next steps

We intend to follow the 2009 audience survey with occasional on-line or traditional paper-based surveys as well as meetings with local communities to discuss how people would like the Screen Machine service to develop and improve.

We are always happy to receive comments about the Screen Machine. Iain and Neil – our two excellent operators – regularly receive feedback from audiences and back in the office we also get phone calls and emails. If you'd like to comment please contact us (details below).

Thanks

The online survey was developed by Grant MacLennan, Graham Campbell and Ron Inglis. The report and analysis was written by Sian Jamieson (HI~Arts).

Contact details

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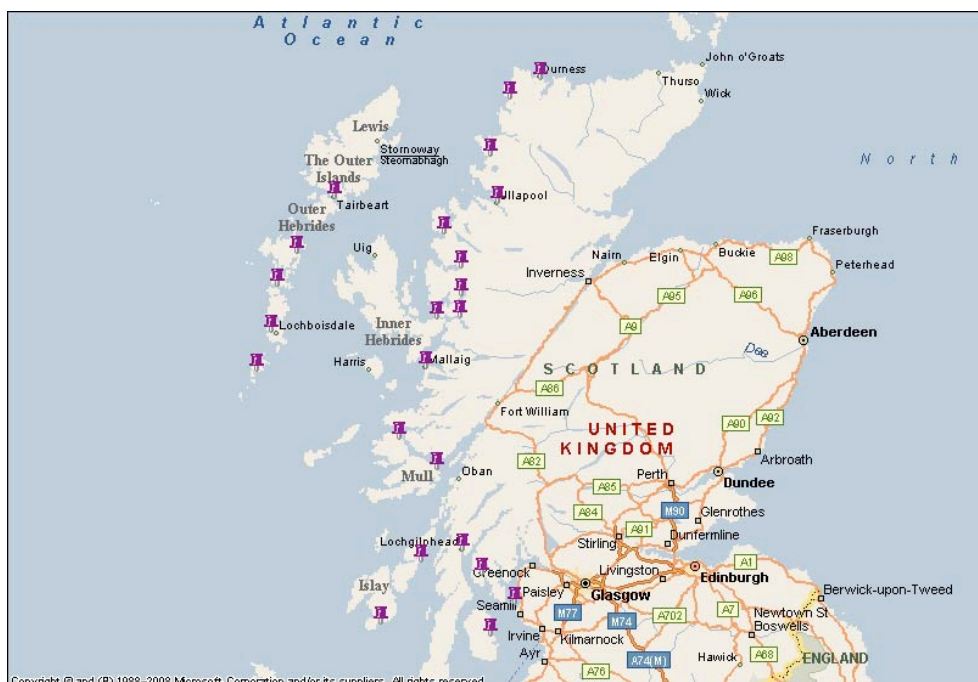
Financial support

Screen Machine relies mainly on the ticket income from the film performances around the Highlands and Islands. It is also financially supported by grants from Scottish Screen, Highland & Islands Enterprise, North Ayrshire Council and Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar. Screen Machine is sponsored by the Royal Bank of Scotland.



1 Screen Machine performance

1.1 Touring locations



Map 1 above shows the current tour locations which are concentrated in three local authority areas: Highland Council, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, and North Ayrshire Council.

1.2 Attendances 2007 - 2009

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
07-08	960	1,844	1,127	3,142	3,322	2,062	1,528	1,766	360	1,295	2,153	2,232
08-09	1,076	1,207	1,330	2,938	3,288	3,429	1,762	1,666	594	2,396	2,455	1,240
09-10	1,164	2,192	1,144	1,556	2,141	2,297	1,454	1,153	156			

1.3 Top grossing films

2007 – 2008

Film	N° Screenings	N° Admissions	Average per screening
1 Pirates of the Caribbean 3	50	2,378	48
2 Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix	40	1,879	47
3 Simpsons: The Movie	32	1,908	60
4 Shrek the Third	35	2,037	58
5 The Golden Compass	37	1,721	47

2008 – 2009

Film	N° Screenings	N° Admissions	Average per screening
1 Mamma Mia	60	4,370	73
2 Indiana Jones	46	2,309	50
3 Madagascar 2	45	2,388	53
4 Kung Fu Panda	43	2,048	48
5 Sex and the City: The Movie	42	1,758	42

April – November 2009

Film	N° Screenings	N° Admissions	Average per screening
Ice Age 3	39	2,128	55
Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince	47	1,966	42
Monsters vs. Aliens	42	1,735	41
Slumdog Millionaire	41	1,093	27
G-Force	26	823	32

1.4 Attendances at each location

	<i>Total attendance 2007–09</i>	<i>% attendance 2007–09</i>		<i>Total attendance 2007–09</i>	<i>% attendance 2007–09</i>
Brodick	7,992	14.1%	Mallaig	2,178	3.8%
Lochgilphead	4,653	8.2%	Daliburgh	1,921	3.4%
Port Ellen	3,914	6.9%	Tarbert, Argyll	1,718	3.0%
Ullapool	3,314	5.8%	Lochcarron	1,557	2.7%
Tarbert, Harris	3,274	5.8%	Kyleakin	1,270	2.2%
Gairloch	3,126	5.5%	Lochmaddy	1,179	2.1%
Millport	3,080	5.4%	Dornie	1,074	1.9%
Creagorry	3,022	5.3%	Kinlochbervie	1,073	1.9%
Tighnabruaich	2,890	5.1%	Craignure	874	1.5%
Castlebay	2,733	4.8%	Durness	842	1.5%
Tobermory	2,493	4.4%	Torridon	509	0.9%
Lochinver	2,179	3.8%	<i>Total</i>	<i>56,865</i>	<i>n/a</i>

2 Survey results

2.1 Survey statistics

Survey Sent to:	3,886	
Survey Viewed	1,133	– 73% of people who viewed the survey completed the survey
Surveys Started	890	– 93% of people, who started the survey, completed the survey
Surveys Completed	826	– The Survey was completed by 826 people, a response rate of 21%

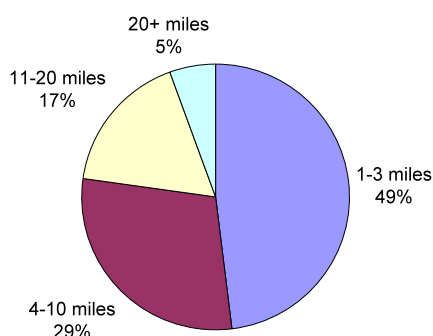
On average it took 9 minutes for respondents to complete the survey

2.2 Survey demographics

<i>Gender</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Male	217	27%
Female	595	73%
Total	812	

<i>Age</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Under 15 years	1	0.1%
15 – 17 years	1	0.1%
18 – 34 years	56	7%
35 – 49 years	346	42%
50 – 64 years	306	38%
Over 65 years	105	13%
Total	815	

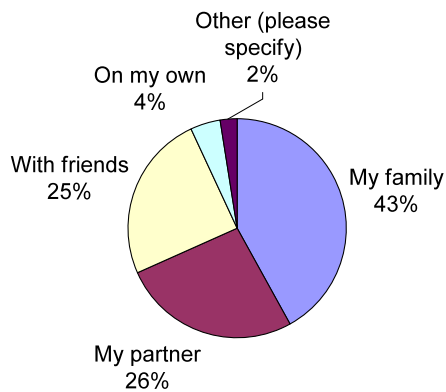
2.3 Distance travelled to attend Screen Machine



- 49% of people travel less than 4 miles to attend
- 29% of people travel between 4 and 10 miles to their nearest Screen Machine location
- 17% travel between 11 and 20 miles to attend
- Only 5% travel 20+ miles to attend

2.4 Who audiences attend with

Question asked: *Who do you usually attend Screen Machine with?*



94% of all respondents attend Screen Machine screenings with someone else, with 69% of these respondents attending with their family or partner.

Attending Screen Machine is therefore considered a social and family orientated event for the vast majority of its audience.

2.5 Frequency of cinema attendance

Question asked: *How many films do you see in cinemas, including in Screen Machine, in a year?*

	Count	Percentage
Less than 5	393	47%
6 - 10	371	44%
11+	79	9%
Total	843	100%

Question asked: *How often have you visited a cinema, other than the Screen Machine, this year?*

	Count	Percentage
Less than 5	713	85%
6 - 10	104	12%
11+	20	2%
Total	837	100%

On average people living in Scotland attend a cinema 3.2 times a year. Based on the information obtained from the survey 47% of people saw less than 5 films in the last year in a cinema including the Screen Machine, while 44% of people had seen between 6 and 10 films in the last year. At least half of the respondents have a higher than average attendance at cinemas.

Respondents did indicate that they attend the Screen Machine more often than they do attend other cinemas in the last year. With 44% of people saying they attend the Screen Machine (and other cinemas) 6 to 10 times a year, whereas 12% of people stated they attended other cinemas (not including the Screen Machine) between 6 and 10 times a year. The provision of the Screen Machine has therefore dramatically increased these respondents cinema-going attendance.

2.6 Preferred place to watch films

Question asked: *Where do you usually prefer to watch a film?*

	Count	Percentage
Screen Machine	629	75%
At home	114	14%
Nearest full-time cinema (e.g. Vue, Cineworld)	75	9%
Local film society/film group	10	1%
Nearest arts venue (e.g. Eden Court)	10	1%
Total	838	100%

Question asked: What do you like about seeing a film at the Screen Machine?

	Count	Percentage
Closest venue that shows film	617	75%
The venue	548	66%
Doesn't come that often so it is a special event	534	65%
The staff	469	57%
The choice of film	459	56%
To see blockbusters on a big screen	429	52%
Know others at the screening	205	25%
Something to do	185	22%
Talk about the film with friends afterwards	174	21%
Other	60	7%
Total	826	100%

60 people added comments including:

- 'It's a very special, unique experience – it has many of the benefits of a 'real' cinema but this is crossed with the intimate experience of watching a film at home with a few friends'.
- 'A Treat! And chance to see big name films and 'be there' – Amazing sound!'
- It is just such an interesting concept and of such high quality in terms of comfort and general ambiance'.
- 'It is a marvellous service to those of us not near a cinema and the staff are so friendly and helpful'.
- 'Our last ferry to and from the mainland is 20.00hrs. Short of attending a matinee, cinemas elsewhere mean an overnight stay which is expensive'.
- 'Having access to a mainland treat without travelling to the mainland!'
- 'If it was not for the Screen Machine we would rarely be able to go into Glasgow to the cinema'.
- 'Most important since we are a very fragile community in the North Western Highlands'.

2.7 Genres of films interested in seeing

Question asked: What types of film are you most interested in watching?

Genre	Count	Percentage
Comedy	605	73%
Action / Adventure	562	68%
Suspense / Drama	521	63%
Romantic comedy	463	56%
Scottish Productions	331	40%
Animation	330	40%
Cinema Classics	321	39%
Musicals	271	33%
Sci-Fi	206	25%
Art house	175	21%
Horror	63	8%
Short Films	58	7%
Other	58	7%
Total	826	100%

Respondent's comment: 'I don't particularly worry about what's up and coming/new releases, I just love going to the Screen Machine, regardless of what's on offer! Obviously I make a choice from what's showing, but there is always something I fancy! It's a wonderful experience, when ever we have visitors when the screen machine is on the island, I always take them along, and they LOVE it!'

2.8 The impact of 3D on cinema viewing

Question asked: Screen Machine will screen some films in 3D starting in January 2010. How do you think this might affect your cinema viewing?

	Count	Percentage
Will improve the cinema experience	442	53%
Won't make any difference	184	22%
Don't know about 3D film	180	22%
Will detract from the cinema experience	29	4%
Total	835	100%

In response to a question about how much more individuals would be prepared to pay for a 3D screening, only 20% of respondents would not pay extra for 3D screenings, while the majority of people (63%) would be willing to pay £1 to a £1.50 extra, demonstrating that the majority of the respondents accept price increases for the 3D experience, and that this is value for money.

2.9 Information sources

Question asked: Where do you get information about the films you want to see?

	Count	Percentage
Screen Machine website	422	51%
Recommendations from friends and family	354	43%
Newspaper reviews	321	39%
TV adverts	229	28%
Film Trailers	214	26%
Internet websites	149	18%
Other cinemas	43	5%
Film magazines	28	3%
YouTube	7	1%
Total	826	100%

Question asked: If you use social networking sites, which ones do you use regularly?

	Count	Percentage
None	477	59%
Facebook	254	31%
Bebo	38	5%
Twitter	25	3%
Other	13	2%
Myspace	7	1%
Total	814	100%

Other:
Of the 13 people who would stated 'other', these networks included:

- You Tube
- Friends Reunited
- UNI Communities
- Flickr
- Arran Online

Over half of all respondents do not use a social networking site, however the demographics show that 80% of all respondents surveyed were aged between 35 and 64 years old, which is now one of the fastest growing age groups for social networking sites such as Facebook (which experienced a 276% growth rate for 35 to 54 year olds in 2009 according to research published by strategylabs.com).

2.10 Programming

Question asked: What is your opinion of the range of films the Screen Machine has shown recently?

	Count	Percentage
Good: fair range, but doesn't fulfil every cinema goers taste	377	45%
Excellent: wide range suitable for all ages and tastes	272	33%
Fair: there is at least one film I would view on every Screen Machine tour	122	15%
Poor: I feel the choice of films doesn't fulfil the tastes of the audience	39	5%
Other	27	3%
Total	837	100%

Overall, 78% of all respondents felt that the Screen Machine program is Good or Excellent, with films to suit most ages and tastes. Only 5% of people felt the program was Poor. However comments left by respondents demonstrate that the programming could benefit from a wider diversity of film, particularly showing less 'children's' films.

Comments included: 'Some enjoyable films but there are times when children's and mainstream American films prevail'.

The selection of films may well be popular, but often the programmes include films with which I am not familiar, as someone who is not particularly knowledgeable about film'.

'A little too much emphasis on films for the younger generations. Would like to see the return of classic "big" films as well as latest releases'.

'There is a wide range, but a film to suit a wide range will always result in a dumbing down process'.

2.11 Cost of attending Screen Machine

Question asked: How did you find the TOTAL COST of going to the Screen Machine compared to visits to other cinemas?

	Count	Percentage
About the same	395	49%
Cheaper	394	49%
More expensive	18	2%
Total	807	100%

2.12 Buying tickets

Question Asked: What is your preferred method of purchasing cinema tickets?

	Count	Percentage
Buy online	589	71%
Buy on the door	192	23%
Buy over the phone	38	5%
Other	5	1%
Total	824	100%

Comments included: 'I'd like to be able to buy in advance, at an island outlet'.

'Pre booking on line is a nonsense. I had assumed that I had reserved my seats, but no. I booked on line, turned up just on time to find that there were no seats left'.

'Let Tourist Office take bookings for tourists and do it for them online'.

'I get emails about forthcoming visits and, because I work in the High School, I see posters. However, I don't think there is nearly enough advertising – I often hear of people missing films because they didn't know they were on'.

'A nice clearly set out list of what is on at each venue would be very welcome'.

2.13 Awareness of local film societies

Question asked: Do you know if there are any Film Societies operating in your area?

	Count	Percentage
Not interested	319	40%
Don't know, but would be interested	193	24%
Yes, but don't want to be a member	83	10%
Yes, but selection of films doesn't interest me	65	8%
Yes, occasionally attend their screenings when it is an interesting film	57	7%
There aren't any, but I would like information about setting one up	33	4%
Yes, I am member	32	4%
Yes, but don't like the venue	24	3%
Total	806	100%

2.14 Film interest and age groups

Respondents were asked to tick all genres of film they were interested in watching. A total of 3,879 selections were made, this was then compared against the respondents age groups.

- Comedy was considered the most popular genre of film amongst 18 – 34 year olds (18%), with action and adventure the second most popular and animation and romantic comedy tied for third.
- Comedy was also rated the most popular amongst the 35 to 49 year olds (16%), action and adventure and romantic comedies featured as second and third most popular.
- 50 to 64 year olds preferred suspense and drama (15%) followed closely by action and adventure (14%).
- The over 65 year olds preferred comedy (15%), and overall appeared to be the most adventurous in film interest, with suspense and drama, cinema classics, action and adventure, Scottish productions, musicals and romantic comedies with equal percentage of 10% or more.

2.15 Gender and attendance behaviour

Respondents were asked what they liked about seeing a film at the Screen Machine, and to select as many options listed to them, a total of 3546 selections were made. This was then compared with the respondent's gender.

- Overall men chose more practical aspects of attending the Screen Machine, with the choice of film (29%) considered the most important reason they liked attending the Screen Machine. The staff (27%) and proximity of the venue (27%) were equally as important to men.
- For women the social element, comfort of attending and the activity itself ranked highly. Talking about the film with friends and family afterwards was considered the most popular reason they attended, with 81%, knowing others at the screening (79%) and the provision of something to do (77%) were considered equally attractive.
- Overall the most popular reason people like attending the Screen Machine was the Venue with 15%, although this element did not rank as highly as choice of film for men and the social aspect of film for women. This may suggest that while venue is considered an important aspect of attendance for both genders, the differences in why people attend (the emotional elements) differ between men and women.

3 Comments

A total of 471 respondents left comments, which equates to 55% of the total survey respondents. A total of 683 different comments were made overall. The table below summarises the survey comments into categories where at least 10 responses were received:

<i>Categories</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Number of Comments made</i>	<i>Percentage of total comments</i>
Supportive Comments	Comments left showing support of the Screen Machine.	267	39%
The Service and Operation	Comments about the service provision and operation/ management of the Screen Machine.	89	13%
Frequency	How often the Screen Machine visits, the programming schedule and time of screenings.	74	11%
Programming	Comments about the programming of films and screening.	68	10%
Marketing and Promotion	Comments made about the marketing and promotional activities carried out by the Screen Machine.	41	6%
Audience Behaviour	Broken down into two areas: 1) Comments made by respondents about people who attend Screen Machine. 2) Comments that highlight cinema behaviour of the Screen Machine audience.	26	4%
Community	How the Screen Machine relates to local communities and interacts with its audience on a community level.	25	4%
Suggestions	Suggestions for improvement.	22	3%
Travel	Comments made about travel in relation to attending	22	3%
Food	Opinions on allowing food to be brought into the Screen Machine and the idea of selling food on location.	13	2%
Price	Comments about the cost of attending the Screen Machine	11	2%

3.1 A sample of the comments received

- *"I think the service provided is generally excellent and it's a superb facility providing 'big city' benefits for outlying communities...even with widescreen TV, there is still no substitute for a large cinema screen."*
- *"I think the Screen Machine is a very important life line for the people of Islay."*
- *"Screen Machine makes a very important contribution to those living in remote areas and in particular to islanders to whom a trip to the cinema on the mainland could be prohibitively expensive especially if they have a family to consider. It also enables isolated communities to maintain contact with culture and social issues portrayed through the medium of the big screen and of course makes a visit to the cinema in these rural areas an entertaining, rewarding and special night out. Everyone I know believes the Screen Machine to be a worthwhile project and are most grateful for the visits of the big van to Arran."*
- *"We would also like to make a special mention of your operator/driver who accompanies the machine here in Lochinver as he is a very pleasant and helpful person."*
- *"Living on an island for 30 years, the advent of the Screen Machine has significantly improved the quality of our families social/cultural life."*
- *"We would find it easier to attend more showings if the Screen Machine stayed maybe for 3 days rather than 2, as there is a wide age range in the family, and the adults don't always get a chance to see a grown up film!"*
- *"More notice of when it is due – running a B&B this would be of interest to some of our guests, partly because of the experience itself and partly for something to do when the weather is poor."*
- *"Whilst we get prior notice by email from The Booth, you have not been advertising your visits in the local newspaper, The Banner which serves the Isle of Arran. If you did you would sell more tickets."*
- *"I probably now watch a more eclectic range of films than before because going to the Screen Machine is an event in itself – the film showing is just a part of that."*
- *"The Screen Machine is always clean and warm, and it is nice to watch it with local people. It is also a social meeting point, like going to church or the shop."*
- *"Screen Machine is a great idea for bringing films to rural areas, booking process is easy and staff very welcoming."*
- *"Website very cumbersome – takes ages to get info about the actual films showing."*
- *"I'm temporarily in a wheelchair and received every help possible from your staff."*
- *"The Screen Machine is a marvellous facility. I often attend with two disabled friends and find it very accessible. It takes me back to the days of the Highlands and Islands Film Guild in village halls! Many who regularly go in our village would never go into Inverness just to attend the cinema. Where else could you greet every viewer individually?"*
- *"The only thing I find prohibitive is the cost. For a family of 5 it is quite expensive and that is the reason we only go maybe every 3^d visit. If it was slightly cheaper we would go more often."*
- *"Taking children to screen machine costs less as don't have to spend at least as much again on popcorn etc!"*
- *"An 'Island Rep' would be a good idea for each island – to display the posters. A couple weeks notice would be good before your arrival – or better – an annual diary of visits would be great!"*
- *"I think Lochcarron is usually visited on a week day too – a weekend visit and more choice of films would be nice every now and then."*
- *"You don't feel so isolated being on the island because you can still get to the cinema without going to the mainland."*
- *"Just to say that it is a wonderful service for a rural area. It is very social and encourages participation with families from same areas who may otherwise not meet. It is an amazing unit and a great piece of modern technology with a pleasant environment for families and film buffs alike."*