The Marketing of the Documentary: "Playing God, or Home Projects to Change the Fabric of Life"

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As it is true in developing any marketing strategy, identifying the target market's attitudes, interests, lifestyles, demographics, and behaviors are critical in the success of the endeavor. The marketing strategy for a documentary requires the positioning of the concept to segments of people with a shared psychographic (that is, an interest in the subject matter of the movie.

There are two distinct target markets for the documentary "Playing god." The first of these are sources of money for the production of the documentary. The audience for the documentary is the second target market.

Pre-production efforts require identifying sources of funding. These include major studios like Sony Pictures Classics (Inside Job, a documentary which presented reasons for the economic crisis)and Paramount Vantage (Waiting for Superman, an indictment of the nation's failing public educational system). Outside the studio establishment are independents and funding sources like The Center for Independent Documentary (established in 1981 to work with independent producers to create projects on issues of social and cultural concern).

Crowdfunding Web sites like Kickstarter.com, Peerbackers.com, RocketHub.com, and IndieGoGo.com, allow documentary-makers a way of fund raising for their projects. The co-founder of Peerbackers.com said: "the economy, combined with social media [like Twitter and Facebook],allows entreprenejurs to get funding that isn't available at the banks." (Maltby)

"Playing god: Home Projects to Change the Fabric of Life" is a documentary looks at home hobbyists and amateur scientists who are studying genetic engineering and cloning. Ten years ago it was not possible to do much gene splicing in a home kitchen. Now, anyone can genetically altered orchids, brew biobeer, make E. coli antibiotic resistant, or do stem cell research on the kitchen table. In an article in The Wall Street Journal, Whalen wrote about biohackers finding their "inner Frankstein" by brewing new life forms in their homes and apartments. An article in The New York Times, dated February 14, 2010, by Jon Moallem, told about a San Francisco community college team that entered the International Genetically Engineered Machine Competition (iGEM) contest held at The Massachusetts Institute of Technology, November 5 - 8, 2010. This undergraduate synthetic biology contest gives teams are given a kit of biological parts to build unique biological systems to function operate in living cells. In 2009, a team from Rice University, Houston, Texas created a genetically engineered beer containing resveratrol. Some scientists believe resveratrol is a powerful anti-aging and cancer prevention substance. Even high schools sponsor projects in the Intel Science Talent Search. These students experiment with molecular biology and genetics, and bacterial genetics (genetically engineered yeast).

The contemporary problem, according to Homeland Security and a number of state governments, there is no regulation of home tweaking, tinkering, or manipulation of the biology of the fabric of life on earth. "In Massachusetts, a young woman makes genetically modified E. coli in a closet she converted into a home lab." (Whalen) This is called "biohacking" when an amateur scientist at home tweaks the building blocks of life. Some are curious, but some are desperate to find the cure for a deadly disease. Another Massachusetts woman searches for a killer of generations of her family. She transformed her bedroom closet into a biological lab. (Johnson) A 17-year-old California teenager is analyzing her family's genome using a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet to do data mining. She compares nucleotide sequences that constitute human DNA. (Marcus)

Critics of home bio-research warn that home experimenters could create a bioweapon In early 2001, Australian scientists published online the recipe for a "mousepox vaccine-resistant" virus. The gene could be ordered freeze-dried. The vaccine-resistant mousepox virus could be created on a two by three-foot kitchen counter space.

In 1984, Johnnie Roberts, a reporter for The Wall Street Journal reported on a Dr. Cloner's Genetic Engineering Home Cloning Kit. Even though kit was similar to a standard university cloning course that included a horizontal gel electrophoresis to split genes, it did not include the bacteria to be cloned. The bacteria commensals (the cause of bad breath and tooth decay) come from the home-cloner's mouth.

You can order a kit to genetically engineer Escherichia coli (a Gram negative bacterium found in everyone's lower intestine) to glow in the dark, or to be antibiotic resistant -- forever.

Homeland Security believes that home biological labs have the potential to breed bioterrorism substances. Some states (for example, Texas and Oregon) ban apparatus that might be used inappropriately in biological experiments. Texas requires special permits to obtain standard lab equipment like Erlenmeyer three-neck flask.

"Playing god" is a documentary that follows the strong forces on either side of the home projects that could change the fabric of life.

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