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Fandor's Indie Film Library to Premiere Wednesday

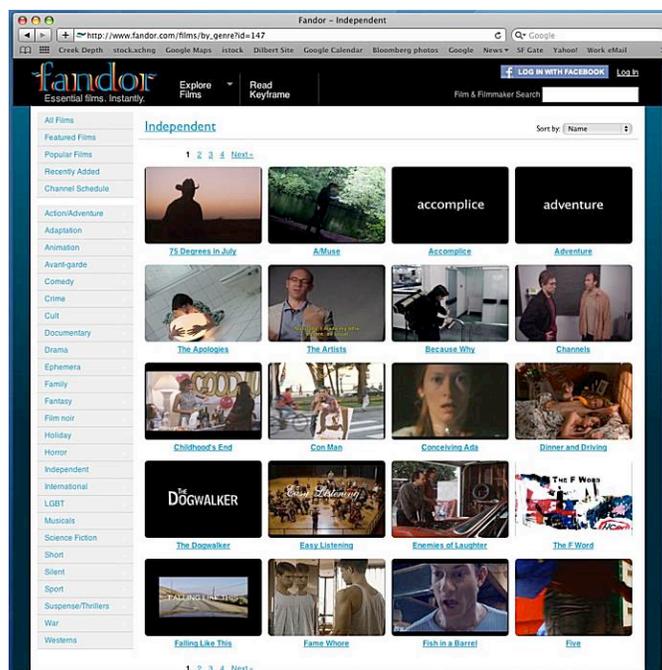
By Benny Evangelista

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Fandor, a San Francisco startup that hopes to become the Netflix of independent films, made its official premiere Wednesday with a library of more than 2,500 titles that includes the Oscar-nominated "Dogtooth."

Fandor hopes to use Facebook to find bigger audiences for high-quality films from independent producers who don't have the luxury of million-dollar marketing budgets and widespread DVD distribution.

"These are the best movies that people haven't heard about," Fandor founder and CEO Dan Aronson said in an interview last week as he prepared for the company's formal premiere at the SXSW conference in Austin, Texas.



Fandor, hoping to carve a film niche, premieres its library of 2,500 indie titles next week.

For a \$9.99 per month subscription, indie film fans can stream movies that they'd only find at film festivals or during limited runs at art houses. Aronson said when he and his wife moved to Berkeley, they often found it difficult to find a babysitter and get back over to catch a movie at the San Francisco International Film Festival before it disappeared from theaters.

But as Netflix is finding, movie buffs in general have a growing appetite for video they can stream into their homes over the Internet, and Fandor hopes to capture a niche audience of indie film fans.

"The world of streaming can completely change the distribution model," Aronson said.

There are, of course, cable channels and websites that also specialize in independent films. And Fandor has about a 20 percent overlap with Netflix's library.

But Aronson said Fandor has professional curators who pick films based on their artistic, historic and entertainment merits.

And Fandor intends to become a place for fans who are "indie curious," Aronson said. "They like films like 'Little Miss Sunshine' or 'Black Swan,' but have no idea how to explore that world."

Fandor has films like the Greek drama "Dogtooth," which received a 2011 Academy Award nomination for Best Foreign Language Film, and "Winnebago Man," the 2010 documentary that drew a cult following.