



The future of ticketing?

Forget stubs, bring your cell phone

Every month or so, my wallet expands to George Costanza-esque proportions thanks to receipts, gift cards, business cards, notes, important papers and, yes, plenty of movie ticket stubs. I force myself to clean it out only when it becomes painful to sit. Now, thanks to the mobile ticketing prog-

timates that around 30-40 patrons use the system at each location during crowded weekend nights. And no technical snags have been reported.

"We're rolling it out slowly, and we're working to increase awareness," says Taylor. Chris Johnson, vice president of Classic



ress made by Fandango and MovieTickets, at least the ticket stubs could be eliminated altogether.

Of course, mobile ticketing provides a bonus beyond fewer bruises to my backside. Sure, it's convenient for moviegoers to buy tickets on their phones. And now they can scan that ticket and then have the ticket scanned directly from their phone. As this allows movie theaters to reduce long lines, it's a win-win situation.

Like any new technology that enters the exhibition space, it takes time and money to expand and become commonplace. But the early results are promising.

Fandango recently reached an agreement with Reading Cinemas to roll out the technology on 100 screens, including busy locations in California, New York, New Jersey and Texas.

"It frees you up," says Tim Taylor, vice president of domestic operations for Reading Cinemas. "You can be riding in a cab and buy your tickets on the way to the movies—and you can avoid the long lines."

Taylor notes that initial feedback has been uniformly positive. On average, Taylor es-

Cinemas, uses mobile ticketing from MovieTickets at the York Theater in Elmhurst, Illinois. Just like Taylor, he has only compliments.

"People like any process that takes the line and hassle away from getting into a movie—or for that matter, avoiding any line period. I think it really is the wave of the future and will speed up lines, and give you a better sense of your ticket sales ahead of time," says Johnson.

"The feedback has been very positive and our company expects to greatly expand its mobile ticketing initiative in 2010," says Joel Cohen, Chief Executive Officer of MovieTickets.com.

Classic has been using mobile ticketing since December 2009, and Johnson estimates that around 25 to 30 percent of patrons are taking advantage. That's a strong number considering that moviegoers are still willing to hook up the computer and print their tickets at home.

Johnson notes that Classic's only issue with mobile ticketing has been the debate over whether to use handheld or mobile ticket scanners.

There's another major advantage to the use of mobile ticketing: it's green. While it's hard to attach a concrete figure to how much paper the process saves, there's no doubt it's less wasteful.

Mobile ticketing could be a major marketing ploy for early-adopting theaters. Staying one step ahead of the competition in an area as crucial as ticketing can entice patrons away from locations that are slow to adapt.

Today's moviegoers are concerned with convenience more than ever. Presenting them with an option that makes it easier to get into a movie theater is a crucial battle victory when the industry is in a greater war against entertainment accessed at home with the click of a button.

Plus, let's face it: we've all lost our ticket stubs at one point. Mobile ticketing will help prevent the feeling of panic that occurs at the doors when you can't find your ticket among the assorted change and receipts in your pocket or purse. And, if you're like me, putting it in your wallet isn't a great option either. It's kind of embarrassing to hand a theater employee a ticket for *Transformers* when you're in line to see the sequel. (True story.) ■

The news cycle attacks 3D

Riding high just last month, the film industry needs to fight its critics with quality product

Negative reactions to *Clash of the Titans* in 3D and a recent jump in ticket prices created a perfect storm of bad publicity for the exhibition industry just as this magazine was about to go to press.

Critics of 3D used the opportunity to pounce on what they are still calling a "gimmick." Even worse, the mainstream media outlets unleashed another round of articles on the "death of exhibition." Some of you reading this have been dealing with that type of article for years. It's an easy story to write: people are going to stop going to the movies because of rising ticket prices, better home-viewing platforms and/or the next trendiest catastrophe. But we all know that's not true.

Still, there are lessons to be learned. The truth is this: a decent percentage of audi-