

# Coming attraction: online chats with film buffs

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(AP) -- As Netflix and other video services offer thousands of movies streamed over the Internet, all those choices are creating a dilemma: what to watch next.

A 2-year-old movie recommendation website called Clerkdogs is addressing the problem by offering online chats with former video store clerks, film critics and other movie buffs.

The chat option is scheduled to debut at 7 p.m. ET Thursday, just as some subscribers to [Netflix](#) Inc.'s rapidly growing [video service](#) might be settling in for an evening of entertainment.

Clerkdogs' chat service initially will be available for a few hours a day, depending on the availability of the roughly 20 former video store clerks who will be providing most of the advice. Within a few months, "Clerks Live" is supposed be available around the clock and staffed by movie and TV critics, film professors and bloggers, as well as the former video store workers.

Netflix recommends [movies](#) to its estimated 19 million subscribers by drawing upon the billions of ratings that its customers have entered into its database since it began delivering DVDs through the mail in 1999. The service added Internet streaming to its service in 2007.

Computer-driven suggestions have always seemed inadequate to Clerkdogs founder, Stuart Skorman, because the technology doesn't

account for mood swings. He thinks many people miss the days when they could talk to a clerk at a video stores. The stores have been closing in the past few years due to competition from Netflix and Redbox's DVD-rental kiosks.

"There is no way people can interact with other humans, but they need to more than ever because there are more movies than ever available online," he said.

Clerkdogs' website serves up recommendations about more than 18,000 movies and TV shows based on the insights of the former clerks.

Netflix recently licensed part of Clerkdogs' database to test how effective it is.

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