

D(e)AD



**REVOLUTIONIZING
INDEPENDENT FILM DISTRIBUTION:**
HOW THE TEAM BEHIND D(E)AD USED KISWE
TO GO DIRECT-TO-FAN

Introduction

In late 2025, Kiswe partnered with independent performing arts venue Dynasty Typewriter and the creative team behind D(e)ad to pioneer a new model for independent film distribution. Following a successful crowdfunding campaign and a limited 100-city theatrical run, the D(e)ad team sought a way to bring their dark comedy directly to their global community. Building on Kiswe's long-standing relationship with Dynasty Typewriter, this partnership transformed a traditional movie screening into a highly interactive, global digital premiere that prioritized fan engagement and unlocked a new revenue stream for the filmmakers.

About Partners

D(e)ad is an independently produced dark comedy directed by and starring Claudia Lonow, and written by and starring her daughter, Isabella Roland. The film, which features a cast of family and friends including familiar faces from Dropout.tv (including Isabella), began as a self-funded project that gained momentum through a \$250,000+ Kickstarter campaign. The story follows Tillie, a young woman navigating the chaos that ensues when her charismatic, alcoholic father dies, and his ghost returns to haunt everyone in the family except her.

Dynasty Typewriter is a renowned LA performing arts venue and production company dedicated to "enchancing the world" through highly curated events since 2018. Kiswe has partnered with the iconic theater on a number of successful events over the last year, including Smosh's 100th episode celebration of the Smosh Reads Reddit Stories livestream and Dead Meat's horror holiday extravaganza, A Bloody Dead Meat Christmas. Their mission of elevating artists and creatives makes them an ideal partner for experimenting with new models of digital and theatrical distribution. Dynasty was the first place D(e)ad was screened, hosting screenings not just for fans but also the initial "friends and family" screening of the film.



The Challenge

For independent filmmakers, the opportunity to have their project picked up by a major streaming platform or access theatrical distribution presents significant barriers. Despite the D(e)ad team's ability to create a large online fanbase and organize over 200 screenings during a limited "DIY" theatrical release in independent cinemas worldwide, there were still many fans who were unable to make it to those events. The excitement surrounding the promotion of the in-person screenings generated excitement among their audience who were eager to have an opportunity to watch for themselves. As a result, the team behind D(e)ad needed a strategy that would:



- **Bridge the Gap:** Deliver the film to global fans who missed the limited theatrical screenings.
- **Eventize the Viewing:** Create a shared social experience within the fan community that felt like a premiere, not just a passive stream.
- **Unlock New Revenue:** Monetize beyond a single ticket price through VIP offerings and merchandise.
- **Own the Data:** Collect first-party fan insights to fuel future creative projects.



Kiswe Solution

To achieve these goals, the digital premiere of the movie was hosted on the Kiswe-powered Dynasty Typewriter streaming platform, a fully branded direct-to-consumer (D2C) destination at live.dynastytypewriter.com. The solution focused on turning the screening into a “can’t-miss” event through:



A Branded Destination: A dedicated landing page designed with D(e)ad and Dynasty Typewriter branding provided a premium, authentic home for the film.



Interactive Premiere: A live watch party where talent and crew interacted with fans in real-time via Kiswe’s integrated chat, creating an immersive “front-row” feel for the audience.



Tiered VIP Packages: The platform enabled VIP upgrades, offering fans access to an exclusive pre-recorded Q&A aftershow with stars Isabella Roland and Vic Michaelis, bundled with limited-edition merch items.



Hybrid Distribution: A seamless transition from the live event to a Video-on-Demand (VOD) offering allowed fans in different time zones to purchase and watch at their convenience.



Results

The partnership illustrated how streaming technology can converge with traditional film to create a thriving digital ecosystem:



Incremental Revenue Opportunity: With over 3,500 tickets sold, the event generated over \$50,000 in total revenue, highlighting the financial impact D2C events can make on a windowed distribution strategy.



The Power of VOD: While fans outside of the geographic reach of theaters were unable to watch the movie in person, the flexibility of digital distribution allowed many fans to watch the movie on-demand on their own schedule, while still having access to all the exclusive merch bundles.



Deep Fan Engagement: By featuring cast and crew in the live chat and providing fans an opportunity to hear the creators answer fan questions after the screening, the event fostered a deep sense of community, transforming passive viewers into active participants in the film's success.

Future Outlook

The success of the D(e)ad digital premiere signals a new era for independent media. By moving beyond traditional distribution models and owning the relationship with their fans, filmmakers can ensure their stories reach a global audience while maintaining creative and financial control.

Learn more at kiswe.com/creators

