

Content Windowing & Availability Readiness Checklist

Availability is a function of time. A title is ready only when the platform can answer, in milliseconds and without a human, whether it may play right now — by territory, business model, and the window's start and end. Engineering guidance, not legal advice; confirm window and territory terms with the rights holder and counsel.

1 · WINDOWING AS DATA (AVAILS)

- Ingest avails, don't type them** — use the EMA Avails format (Excel + XML, MovieLabs).
- One avail = title + territory + model + start + end + price** — the availability function, written down.
- Key every title to EIDR** — one stable ID (RFC 7972) from avail to playback to royalty report.
- Window length lives in data, not code** — deals shift; a hard-coded window is a future ticket.

2 · THE CASCADE & THE CLOCK

- Model the staircase** — theatrical → TVOD/PVOD → EST → SVOD → AVOD/FAST → broadcast.
- Store start AND end as precise instants WITH time zone** — 'available 1 March' is a moment somewhere.
- Handle embargo / holdback** — you hold the files but may not show them until a later date.
- Handle pre-order** — page visible and orderable, playback locked until the street date.

GO-LIVE GATE — BEFORE OPENING OR CLOSING A WINDOW

Confirm every window is captured as data — ingested from EMA Avails, keyed to an EIDR identifier, and read by the same availability service that already checks territory and business tier. Confirm start and end are stored as precise instants WITH time zones and that scheduled jobs flip titles live and dark per territory, not on one server clock. Confirm enforcement happens in TWO places — the catalog/discovery layer so an expired title stops showing, and the playback/entitlement layer so it stops playing even from a saved deep link or a stale recommendation. Confirm the business-model edge cases: SVOD/AVOD/FAST go dark at the avail end, but an EST purchase generally persists past it — so separate 'the catalog window closed' from 'this person owns this title'. Test the failure cases: a window ending across many time zones, a pre-order flipping to playable at the street date, and an expiring title still reachable from an old URL. This is engineering guidance, not legal advice; confirm window and territory terms with the rights holder and qualified counsel.

3 · AUTOMATIC ENFORCEMENT

- One availability service** computes 'in window now?' on every render and play — never a static flag.
- Scheduled publish / unpublish jobs** flip titles live and dark on their dates, per territory.
- Get the time zone right per territory** — one UTC job cuts off Hawaii early and breaches in Japan.
- Enforce in TWO places** — catalog (stop it showing) AND player (stop it playing via old links).

4 · BUSINESS-MODEL EDGE CASES

- SVOD / AVOD / FAST windows are time-boxed** — the title goes dark at the avail end.
- EST is the exception** — a purchase generally survives the window; separate 'window closed' from 'owns it'.
- FAST churns fastest** — a 200-hr channel at 25-30% refresh rotates ~60 hrs/yr of windows.
- Wire windowing into the same entitlement service** as territory and tier — one yes/no, not three.