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Apple Inc. has set a budget of roughly \$1 billion to procure and produce original content over the next year, according to people familiar with the matter—a sign of how serious the iPhone maker is about making a splash in Hollywood.

The achievements of an organization are the results of the combined effort of each individual. ~ Vince Lombardi



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Combined with the company's marketing clout and global reach, that immediately makes Apple a considerable competitor in a crowded market where new media players and traditional media companies are vying to acquire original shows. The figure is about half what Time Warner Inc.'s HBO spent on content last year and on par with estimates of what Amazon.com Inc. spent in 2013, the year after it announced its move into original programming.

Apple could acquire and produce as many as 10 television shows, according to the people familiar with the plan, helping fulfill Apple Senior Vice President Eddy Cue's vision of offering high-quality video—similar to shows such as HBO's "Game of Thrones"—on the company's streaming-music service or a new, video-focused service.

The budget will be in the hands of Hollywood veterans Jamie Erlich and Zack Van Amburg, poached in June from Sony Corp. to oversee content acquisition and video

strategy. They exited their Sony contracts a month early and started working this month from Apple's Los Angeles offices, where they are taking over programming responsibilities from the Apple Music team, according to the people familiar with the matter.

Elbowing into the crowded video business won't be easy. Amazon and Netflix Inc. have considerable head starts and far bigger programming budgets. Apple also has to avoid jeopardizing its 15% cut of

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subscriptions from its app stores for video services like Netflix and HBO Go—a growing contributor to its [\\$24.35 billion in annual services revenue](#). Programming costs can range from more than \$2 million an episode for a comedy to more than \$5 million for a drama. An episode of some high-end shows such as “Game of Thrones” can cost more than \$10 million to produce.

The [back-to-back success of the original shows “House of Cards” and “Orange Is the New Black”](#) is credited with building Netflix’s business. At the time they were released the company’s annual budget for original and acquired programming was about \$2 billion; this year it is expected to spend more than \$6 billion. For its video service to gain relevance, Apple needs at least one hit, according to the people familiar with the plan. The company’s initial video efforts—“Planet of the Apps,” launched in June on Apple Music, and “Carpool Karaoke,” launched last week—were criticized by reviewers.

With \$215.64 billion in revenue last fiscal year and more than \$261 billion in cash on its balance sheet, though, Apple could quickly ramp up spending on content. Mr. Van Amburg and Mr. Erlicht have begun meeting with Hollywood agents and holding discussions about shows Apple could acquire, the people familiar said. The men also hired former WGN America President Matt Cherniss to oversee development, the people said.

Mr. Cherniss will assist with finding programming. He previously worked with Mr. Erlicht and Mr. Van Amburg to bring the Sony shows “Underground” and “Outsiders” to WGN. Mr. Cherniss also has movie experience, having worked as a production executive at Warner Bros. Apple is eager to shore up its existing video business—renting movies and TV shows through iTunes—which has been challenged by the rise of video-subscription services that offer programming for a monthly fee. Last year, iTunes generated an estimated \$4.1 billion in revenue, but its share of the movie rental-and-sales market has [declined to less than 35% from 50% in 2012](#).

Apple is hoping that original video bolsters the appeal of movie rentals and other iTunes offerings—a critical piece of its services business, which also includes App Store sales, Apple Pay and Apple Music. The company aims to double that business to about \$50 billion by 2020. – *Wall Street Journal*

Technology companies’ recent moves to crack down on white supremacists thrust them into unusual territory for corporations that often take a more hands-off approach to who uses their services and how. In the wake of weekend violence at a white supremacists rally in Charlottesville, Va., Alphabet Inc.’s Google and GoDaddy Inc. [stopped providing hosting support](#) for the Daily Stormer, a neo-Nazi site that the companies said violated their terms of service. Airbnb Inc. banned participants in the rally from staying in rentals booked through its site.

Uber Technologies Inc. blacklisted white supremacist James Allsup after Mr. Allsup and another passenger allegedly made racist remarks to their driver in Washington, D.C., on Friday night. In a video Mr. Allsup posted on Twitter, Mr. Allsup is heard asking the driver what he said was racist. Crowdfunding site GoFundMe removed campaigns to raise money to bail out the [driver charged with speeding into a crowd](#) of counterprotesters on Saturday, which killed 32-year-old Heather Heyer.

On Tuesday, payments company PayPal Holdings Inc. reiterated that it works to ensure “that our services are not used to accept payments or donations for activities that promote hate, violence or racial intolerance,” saying that includes white supremacists and Nazi groups. It is unclear if PayPal has recently removed or suspended any accounts that violated its terms of service. Behind the swift action from the companies lie considerations about freedom of speech and the legal application of company policy, which seems to vary depending on who the end user is. Companies that are considered communications platforms have the greatest leeway to enforce policies that bar certain users, legal experts say.

Tech companies “certainly have the right to make their own judgments about what’s in the terms of service and whether it’s being violated,” said Mike Yang, former general counsel at Pinterest Inc. and a former deputy general counsel at Google. Recently, the debate about what kind of speech tech firms allow on their platforms has focused on companies such as Facebook Inc., which [has hosted fake news](#) as well as [violent live videos](#), and Twitter Inc., which has [ramped up efforts to remove some accounts](#) from its site.

Following the violence in Virginia, domain registrars—which act as intermediaries by making sure that a website’s domain name is linked to the correct IP address—have also become arbiters of free speech. If a registrar pulls service from a site, the site will appear offline to the public until it finds another registration provider. “The number of net intermediaries acting as gatekeepers has increased,” since GoDaddy booted Daily Stormer, said Daphne Keller, who studies platforms’ legal responsibilities at the Stanford Center for Internet and Society. “Suddenly the domain registrars are

sitting in judgment on content and speech," joining the usual players around free speech such as Google, Facebook and Twitter.

Domain registrar GoDaddy said that, while it doesn't usually take actions on complaints that would "constitute censorship of content," it decided that an article Daily Stormer posted ridiculing Ms. Heyer crossed the line "to promoting, encouraging, or otherwise engaging in violence against any person." On Sunday, it gave Daily Stormer 24 hours to find a new registrar. Daily Stormer then registered on Google. Hours later, Google canceled Daily Stormer's website-hosting registration, saying the site violated Google's policies against inciting violence.

Daily Stormer, whose site was inaccessible Tuesday, didn't respond to a request for comment. Many of the actions that companies have taken against supremacists would probably be unconstitutional under the First Amendment if imposed by an elected official or public agency, experts say. The First Amendment's protections of speech and expression are restrictions on government power. "In general, the First Amendment is no barrier to discrimination on the basis of ideology or speech by a private person or entity," said Dale Carpenter, a constitutional law professor at SMU School of Law in Dallas.

Airbnb rejected the reservations of some visitors to Charlottesville after it said it learned earlier this month that they were planning to stay in and organize "a series of after parties at several Airbnb listings while in town to attend this terrible event," the company said in a statement. The company pointed to its community commitment as the reason for rejecting their reservations. "We require those who are members of the Airbnb community to accept people regardless of their race, religion, national origin, ethnicity, disability, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, or age," the company said. "When we see people pursuing behavior on the platform that would be antithetical to the Airbnb Community Commitment, we take appropriate action."

However, companies such as Airbnb and Uber could face more challenges to applying their policies because the business segments they operate in open them up to a host of local laws, experts say. Businesses that offer their services to the public must comply with state and local laws banning various kinds of discrimination. Those laws typically protect against discrimination on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity and gender. Unless a company is targeting supremacists because of their gender or race, those laws probably wouldn't apply, according to UCLA constitutional scholar Eugene Volokh.

That's not true everywhere. A few places like Seattle have laws that also ban discrimination on the basis of political ideology. Seattle's public accommodations law says a business can't turn away a patron because of conduct "reasonably related to political ideology" unless the customer's conduct would "cause substantial and material disruption" of the owner's property rights. In California, where antidiscrimination laws are particularly strong, its courts ruled that a German restaurant in Torrance couldn't evict patrons just for wearing swastika pins. An unsubstantiated fear of "troublemakers" didn't justify a topless bar owner in San Diego denying admission to men clad in motorcycle club insignia, under a separate ruling.

Airbnb has [argued in lawsuits](#) against cities like San Francisco and Anaheim, Calif., that it is a communications platform, putting it in the same class as Facebook or Twitter, not a short-term rental business. The lawsuit against San Francisco settled in May without a clear resolution on whether Airbnb is a communications platform. Anaheim appeared to recognize Airbnb as a communications company. For Airbnb, excluding renters based on their racist views is a shift from last year, when the company [changed how information is shared on its site](#) after renters said hosts discriminated against them for race or other characteristics. — *Wall Street Journal*

A two-term incumbent House member intends to formally announce her candidacy on Aug. 29 for the 28th state senatorial district seat [being vacated next year by Scott Wagner who is running for governor](#). Rep. [Kristin Phillips-Hill, a Republican](#), said she will make her announcement at the Wise Haven Event Center located at 2985 East Prospect Road, York, starting around 5 p.m. The former Dallastown Area School Board member's interest in the Senate seat that represents a large portion of York County including the city of York, drew praise from the York County Republican Committee Chairman Alex Shorb. "I think she would be excellent for the position," Shorb said. "I think she's done a very good job in the House. She learned what the job entails. I think she would be excellent in that new role."

Wagner also supports Phillips-Hill's candidacy. "I think she'll be a good candidate. Kristin is a very knowledgeable person and I think it would be a good move for her," he said. Wagner, whose term expires at the end of next year, announced last year that he would not be seeking re-election to a second four-year term and instead, would vie to become the GOP candidate to take on incumbent

Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf. Attempts to contact York County Democratic Committee Chairman Chad Baker on Tuesday about possible candidates interested in that party's nomination were unsuccessful. This Senate seat has been in Republican hands since 1995. – pennlive.com



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