

# Online games and self-publishing platforms: movie producers tap new avenues for fresh plotlines



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## Summary

With few movie or show titles finding favour either in cinemas or on streaming platforms, producers and studios are tapping new avenues such as online games and other digital platforms to unearth stories that can resonate with a larger audience.

Producer Siddharth Roy Kapur-led Roy Kapur Films has partnered with self-publishing and audiobook platform Pratilipi, a company with which Disney Star (now part of Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Ltd) has also signed a deal.

Production company Banijay Asia recently partnered with [Nazara Technologies](#) Ltd-owned esports platform NODWIN Gaming Pvt. Ltd to adapt mobile games into reality shows.

Indian movies are having a [tough time drawing audiences to the theatres](#). Bollywood, the Hindi film industry and India's largest, is expected to see a meagre 10-20% year-on-year increase in revenue for the first half of 2025, Mint reported on 17 June citing trade experts. But for a few big-ticket releases, the Hindi film business is likely to fall short of the box-office collection in the first half of calendar 2024.

Entertainment industry experts say this approach could help studios and producers speak to the youth and audiences in the heartland and stand out in a cluttered market. Movie studios globally already tap popular novels, comics and games for stories that could resonate with a wide audience.

“Studios and producers worldwide are realising that to consistently succeed in any format, be it movies, OTT shows, or any other, you need to have a great story at the core of it,” Ranjeet Pratap Singh, chief executive and co-founder, Pratilipi, said. “If the core story or IP (intellectual property) is already proven to resonate with a large group of people, it has much better odds of success in a new format.”

While IP sharing varies widely depending on the partnership, Pratilipi has largely struck deals in which it retains the base IP and non-audio visual derivative rights while the distributor or studio hold the audio-visual rights.

Deepak Dhar, founder and group CEO of Banijay Asia and EndemolShine India, said in a statement while announcing the partnership with NODWIN Gaming that the production company was focused on creating content that can resonate with evolving youth audiences. “Gaming is not just a sport; it’s a culture, a lifestyle, and a massive content opportunity,” added Dhar.

## **‘Tapping newer, culturally resonant spaces’**

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Entertainment industry experts emphasize there is a clear cost advantage in picking stories that have already been tested and loved on other platforms.

Developing a story from scratch involves considerable time and resources, ideation, writing, revisions, test screenings and, often, multiple rewrites. In contrast, when a studio acquires a story from Pratilipi or adapts a game from NODWIN, it would be building on an existing foundation that has a fan following for its characters and fictional universe.

This not only reduces the development time but also lowers the financial risk. Also, marketing gets a head start when audiences are already familiar with the source material.

Munish Vaid, vice-president, Primus Partners, a management consultancy, acknowledged that studios are now looking beyond traditional scripts and turning to platforms like Pratilipi or NODWIN Gaming because that is where fresh, community-driven storytelling is happening.

“It is also a strategic way to stay relevant in a content-heavy landscape, where standing out requires tapping into newer, culturally resonant spaces. Storytelling today is not just about writing a script but about sensing where stories are naturally emerging and meeting audiences there,” Vaid said.

However, stories from publishing platforms or games often need significant adaptation to fit the pacing, tone and emotional depth expected from film or series formats.

For example, a story on a publishing app might rely on episodic drama, while a game might have more action and world-building. These elements need to be reshaped for a more passive, cinematic audience without losing the original spirit. The core idea might stay the same, but the treatment, narrative structure and even character arcs usually require thoughtful reimagining.

Some critics point out that while tapping digital platforms and online games for stories make for interesting content alliances and announcements, most ideas or scripts will eventually have to be funded and commissioned by OTT platforms.

“Producers no longer want to tell westernised stories and many of these are grassroots tales with local resonance,” film producer, trade and exhibition expert Girish Johar said, pointing to the success of a film like the 2022 blockbuster Kantara. The Kannada language action thriller set in coastal Karnataka is lauded for telling a compelling local story that eventually found appeal across the country.