

## **Do “Mobile Cinemas” in Mainland China Pose threats on Traditional Cinemas?**

Exhibitors at the 14<sup>th</sup> China (Shenzhen) International Cultural Industries Fair launched a conference on “mobile cinemas” to showcase playing films on smartphones and tablets. “We have lost our competitive advantage of having film sources. This is the most worrying concern,” cinema investors and cinema lines at the fair panicked as if it was the end of the world.

The backer and some experts behind “mobile cinemas” attempted to tone down the situation claiming “mobile cinemas”, strived to be the complementary strand of the existing film distributing channels, targeted areas without traditional cinema coverage and the population that lacked spare time for cinema-going.

The explanation has not eased the deepening fears of cinemas and cinema lines. The box office hit “Avenger: Infinity War”, with a 3-hour runtime, opened with a 3D version. “Mobile cinemas” could easily scoop a large portion of audience from traditional cinemas with major blockbusters at a relatively high ticket price probably not from first tier cities, but possibly from second, third and fourth tier cities. “Mobile cinemas” would not forgo millions of potential end-users to avoid competition with traditional cinemas.

Investors and cinema lines understand that the screening platform is never the private domain of traditional cinemas. As streaming platforms, such as Netflix, become more diversified and popular, they complement traditional cinemas from a broad industry perspective. Competition will only intensify. The only way to maintain a competitive edge and sustain performance is to grasp the nettle, improve the quality of motion and sound, enhance the service and the advantage as a social venue, and reinforce the self-release channels of films.