



Netflix Update – Pre 4Q15 Earnings

As Netflix (NFLX: \$104/share) readies to report earnings the afternoon of January 19, 2016, we'd like to take a look at what we know, what we expect, and review just how overvalued NFLX remains.

Consensus estimates for the quarter are \$1.83 billion in revenue and \$0.02 per share. However, those numbers are not the main story. More important are the issues with the company's business model that are not reflected in the reported accounting results:

- [Netflix's streaming content costs are outpacing revenue growth](#). While revenues have grown by 30% compounded annually from 2003- trailing twelve months, content costs have grown by 53% compounded annually.
- [Subscriber growth is slowing domestically and is getting more unprofitable abroad](#). International contribution margin fell to -13% in 3Q15, down from -9% the year prior.
- Netflix's accounting practices allow the company to understate its cash burn. From 2011-2014, Netflix burned through a cumulative \$2 billion in [free cash flow](#). The cash burn is getting worse as over the trailing twelve months, Netflix's free cash flow is -\$1.4 billion.
- [The way Netflix accounts for its streaming costs](#) has led to a nearly \$1 billion discrepancy between reported content costs and actual cash payments from 2011-2014.
- [Competition is growing and only getting more competitive](#). At its core, Netflix is only a delivery platform, undifferentiated from the numerous others such as Amazon Video, Hulu Plus, HBO Now, or Verizon' Go90.
- Since 2010, when Netflix began ramping up its streaming content library, the company's return on invested capital ([ROIC](#)) has fallen from 55% to 5%. Its net operating profit after-tax ([NOPAT](#)) margin has fallen from 8% to 3%.

What To Expect From Earnings Call

When Netflix reports earnings, we expect much of the same that we've seen in the past. Particularly, we expect:

- Content costs to continue rising faster than revenues.
- International margins to decline, thereby undermining any domestic margin increase.
- Domestic subscriber growth to continue to decelerate YoY.
- Management to project some future date for when international growth will become profitable, thereby attempting to push bear concerns off for another quarter.

How Overvalued Have Shares Become?

We've previously pointed out just how overvalued Netflix is by quantifying how many subscribers the company would need to justify its current valuation. At its current price of \$104/share, NFLX would have to [grow profits by 27% compounded annually for the next 20 years](#). In this scenario, the company would be generating \$859 billion in revenue in 20 years, which at \$9.99/month would imply Netflix has 7.1 billion unique, worldwide subscribers. For reference, at the end of 3Q15, Netflix had 69 million worldwide subscribers and the global population is right around 7 billion. It probably makes sense to cut the total addressable subscriber population for Netflix by at least 10-20% given that most Netflix users share accounts with other people.

Disclosure: David Trainer and Kyle Guske II receive no compensation to write about any specific stock, sector, or theme.

New Constructs® – Profile

How New Constructs Creates Value for Clients

We find it. You benefit. Cutting-edge technology enables us to scale our [forensic accounting expertise](#) across 3000+ stocks. We shine a light in the dark corners of SEC filings so our clients can make safer, more informed decisions.

Our [stock rating methodology](#) instantly informs you of the quality of the business and the fairness of the stock's valuation. We do the diligence on earnings quality and valuation so you don't have to.

In-depth risk/reward analysis underpins our ratings. Our rating methodology grades every stock, ETF, and mutual fund according to what we believe are the 5 most important criteria for assessing the quality of an equity. Each grade reflects the balance of potential risk and reward of buying that equity. Our analysis results in the 5 ratings described below. Very Attractive and Attractive correspond to a "Buy" rating, Very Dangerous and Dangerous correspond to a "Sell" rating, while Neutral corresponds to a "Hold" rating.

QUESTION: Why shouldn't fund research be as good as stock research? Why should fund investors rely on backward-looking price trends?

ANSWER: They should not.

Don't judge a fund by its cover. Take a look inside at its holdings and understand the quality of earnings and valuation of the stocks it holds. We enable you to choose the best fund based on its stock-picking merits so you do not have to rely solely on backward-looking technical metrics.

The drivers of our [forward-looking fund ratings](#) are Portfolio Management (i.e. the aggregated ratings of its holdings) and Total Annual Costs. The Total Annual Costs Rating ([details here](#)) captures the all-in cost of being in a fund over a 3-year holding period, the average period for all fund investors.

Our Philosophy About Research

Accounting data is not designed for equity investors, but for debt investors. [Accounting data must be translated into economic earnings](#) to understand the profitability and valuation relevant to equity investors. Respected investors (e.g. Adam Smith, Warren Buffett and Ben Graham) have repeatedly emphasized that accounting results should not be used to value stocks. [Economic earnings](#) are what matter because they are:

1. Based on the complete set of financial information available.
2. Standard for all companies.
3. A more accurate representation of the true underlying cash flows of the business.

Additional Information

Incorporated in July 2002, [New Constructs](#) is an independent publisher of investment research that provides clients with consulting and research services. We specialize in quality-of-earnings, forensic accounting and discounted cash flow valuation analyses for all U.S. public companies. We translate accounting data from 10Ks into economic financial statements, i.e. [NOPAT](#), [Invested Capital](#), and [WACC](#), to create [economic earnings models](#), which are necessary to understand the true profitability and valuation of companies. Visit the [Free Archive](#) to download samples of our research. New Constructs is a [BBB accredited](#) business and a member of the [Investorside Research Association](#).

DISCLOSURES

New Constructs®, LLC (together with any subsidiaries and/or affiliates, "New Constructs") is an independent organization with no management ties to the companies it covers. None of the members of New Constructs' management team or the management team of any New Constructs' affiliate holds a seat on the Board of Directors of any of the companies New Constructs covers. New Constructs does not perform any investment or merchant banking functions and does not operate a trading desk.

New Constructs' Stock Ownership Policy prevents any of its employees or managers from engaging in Insider Trading and restricts any trading whereby an employee may exploit inside information regarding our stock research. In addition, employees and managers of the company are bound by a code of ethics that restricts them from purchasing or selling a security that they know or should have known was under consideration for inclusion in a New Constructs report nor may they purchase or sell a security for the first 15 days after New Constructs issues a report on that security.

DISCLAIMERS

The information and opinions presented in this report are provided to you for information purposes only and are not to be used or considered as an offer or solicitation of an offer to buy or sell securities or other financial instruments. New Constructs has not taken any steps to ensure that the securities referred to in this report are suitable for any particular investor and nothing in this report constitutes investment, legal, accounting or tax advice. This report includes general information that does not take into account your individual circumstance, financial situation or needs, nor does it represent a personal recommendation to you. The investments or services contained or referred to in this report may not be suitable for you and it is recommended that you consult an independent investment advisor if you are in doubt about any such investments or investment services.

Information and opinions presented in this report have been obtained or derived from sources believed by New Constructs to be reliable, but New Constructs makes no representation as to their accuracy, authority, usefulness, reliability, timeliness or completeness. New Constructs accepts no liability for loss arising from the use of the information presented in this report, and New Constructs makes no warranty as to results that may be obtained from the information presented in this report. Past performance should not be taken as an indication or guarantee of future performance, and no representation or warranty, express or implied, is made regarding future performance. Information and opinions contained in this report reflect a judgment at its original date of publication by New Constructs and are subject to change without notice. New Constructs may have issued, and may in the future issue, other reports that are inconsistent with, and reach different conclusions from, the information presented in this report. Those reports reflect the different assumptions, views and analytical methods of the analysts who prepared them and New Constructs is under no obligation to insure that such other reports are brought to the attention of any recipient of this report.

New Constructs' reports are intended for distribution to its professional and institutional investor customers. Recipients who are not professionals or institutional investor customers of New Constructs should seek the advice of their independent financial advisor prior to making any investment decision or for any necessary explanation of its contents.

This report is not directed to, or intended for distribution to or use by, any person or entity who is a citizen or resident of or located in any locality, state, country or jurisdiction where such distribution, publication, availability or use would be contrary to law or regulation or which would be subject New Constructs to any registration or licensing requirement within such jurisdiction.

This report may provide the addresses of websites. Except to the extent to which the report refers to New Constructs own website material, New Constructs has not reviewed the linked site and takes no responsibility for the content therein. Such address or hyperlink (including addresses or hyperlinks to New Constructs own website material) is provided solely for your convenience and the information and content of the linked site do not in any way form part of this report. Accessing such websites or following such hyperlink through this report shall be at your own risk.

All material in this report is the property of, and under copyright, of New Constructs. None of the contents, nor any copy of it, may be altered in any way, copied, or distributed or transmitted to any other party without the prior express written consent of New Constructs. All trademarks, service marks and logos used in this report are trademarks or service marks or registered trademarks or service marks of New Constructs.

Copyright New Constructs, LLC 2003 through the present date. All rights reserved.
