Big screen dominated by reign of the supermen

By Brian Kibble
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Hey! Look, up on the movie screen! It’s Wolverine! It’s Spider-Man! It’s…

By now the flooding of big screen superhero adaptations is becoming pretty obvious.

Over the years, numerous superheroes have had the opportunity of headlining their own films. Actors Christopher Reeve (Superman), Michael Keaton (Batman), Wesley Snipes (Blade), Hugh Jackman (Wolverine), Tobey Maguire (Spider-Man) and Ben Affleck (Daredevil) have portrayed some of the more high-profile roles, but they haven’t been the only ones. Michael Jai White portrayed the lesser-known Spawn in 1997 and Eric Bana will become The Incredible Hulk this summer.

The main reason for this is thanks to Marvel Comics, one of the major comic book publishing companies, going bankrupt in the late 1990s and filing for Chapter 11 due to sagging book sales. In bankruptcy, Marvel sold the rights to their character properties to film companies.

First came Blade in 1998, which was a moderate success. Few knew it ties to film companies.

Now, as a result, 2003 will see more comic book superheroes on the big screen than ever. Starting with today’s release of Daredevil, continuing with the sequel to X-Men, X2, in May and then a “remake” of The Hulk in June. Unfortunately for Marvel, movie audiences might be a little overwhelmed.

According to senior Ryan Kotarski, the films are positive, especially for the comics industry, as the big screen adaptations will attract more business.

“I think these movies are good. All of them will get more people to read the comic books,” he said.

Marvel executives are hoping for just that. And many of the moviegoers who are not followers of the comics, such as senior Jessica Sandycz, think along the same lines.

“I think it is good these superhero movies are coming out,” she said. “It’s something different from the rest of the movies out now and they will probably broaden people’s interests.”

However, there is a downside to superheroes getting a big screen debut. With the major characters such as Spider-Man and the X-Men making it big, the “B” characters are likely to get their shot as well. Audiences will probably not recognize them as comic book heroes and therefore more about characters like The Fantastic Four and Ghost Rider that are in the works, could be super flops.

Once these movies start hitting theaters too quickly, many people might probably not recognize them as comic book heroes and therefore movies about characters like The Fantastic Four and Ghost Rider that are in the works, could be super flops.

But so far, all of the recent films coming out on superheroes are based on Marvel Comics characters. What about DC Comics, Marvel’s leading competitor and the famed creators of the hits Superman and Batman?

DC is currently trying to make more sequels to both the man of steel series and the dark knight franchise, along with a possible Wonder Woman movie. But will they succeed amongst the other super characters competing on the big screen?

For now, the movies are entertaining and fun, but if the film industry keeps releasing super powered films, audiences will more than likely lose interest and the superheroes might end up being the ones who need rescuing after all.