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Hollywood Fan Favorites

Lauren Streib 07.28.08, 12:40 PM ET

There may be too many celebrity lists, but there's only one Will Smith.

Smith is the kind of performer that fans love to love, playing big, affirmative characters who seem to match the person he is in real life.

"It's just Will Smith every time you see him," says Ellis Cashmore, author of *Celebrity Culture*. "That's a supposed part of the secret of remaining on the A list--to imprint your own personality on the roles. People go back to the box office because they know they're going to like it."

In Pictures: Hollywood's Fan Favorites

To arrive at our top 10 stars with the most devoted followers, we reached out to E-Poll Market Research for the 30 actors with the highest E-Score appeal data. We then created a metric that weighed these scores with online fan activity through Google Blogs and the average international box office of each star's last three wide-release films according to Box Office Mojo.

At the top of our list, Smith has the second-highest E-Score appeal ranking, an average box office gross of \$420 million and is the second most talked about star on the Web.

Tom Hanks, who ranks at No. 2 on our list, is another actor who retains his personality through various roles. Hanks' appeal ranking placed him just outside of the top five, but his box office success boosted his rank. Hanks' characters are often charming with honorable ambitions.

That consistency in choice of likable roles leads to continuous box office success. "There's an aspect of brand familiarity there," says Michael Levine, Hollywood media expert and author.

But the likability factor of celebrities is dependent on the intersection of their personal and private lives. As most of the names on our list prove--the less the public knows about the personal lives of stars, the more favorably they feel towards them.

Noticeably absent from the list are tabloid mainstays like Tom Cruise, rumored bed-hoppers and Hollywood's young guard.

Embarrassing public drama may be good for newsstand sales and increased "exposure," but it doesn't breed positive reception from the public.

Would tawdry news about fan favorites make the tabloids? Maybe, if it's just too juicy to pass up. But for the most part, "These celebrities are the untouchables in a way," says Cashman.

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