



Streaming Internet media to your TV¹

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What is streaming media?

With streaming media, TV shows and movies can be accessed over the Internet, so you can watch them as soon as you want. At first, this was only possible on devices like computers, tablets, and smart phones that had Internet connections built into them already. But of course those are a lot smaller screens than your TV so, again, not optimal.

What streaming media players do is take the signal from the Internet and pass it over to your TV using different types of connectors (composite video cords, HDMI cables, and so on) so that you can watch computer and Internet videos on your nice TV with the enhanced sound system, and you can watch them without needing to physically connect your computer to your TV.^{2,3}

Can I get rid of my cable/satellite service?

Short answer: No.

Longer answer: This is one of the biggest questions people have when it comes to streaming media devices. The answer depends on what it is you want to watch. Streaming media players do not provide most local or live programming — at least, not in their entirety. For example, you're not likely to be able to get your local morning news show. Even for a national program like The Today Show, you may be able to see some of their segments through your streaming media device, but not the entire program.

1 Compiled by Pete Schult, 2017-02-28.

I adapted Mike's handout, Streaming video, 2015-05-13 for parts of this handout.

2 Depending on your computer and TV, you might be able to physically connect them to each other so the TV acts like a projector. See the subsection "A couple other possibilities" after the summary table below for a link to further information on this option.

3 Google Chromecast works differently from the other devices I present here. In a sense, it is a compromise between using a dedicated device and physically connecting your computer to your TV. It doesn't take the signal from the Internet directly but rather creates a wireless connection between your computer/tablet/phone and your TV so that whatever you're streaming on the device is displayed on the TV.

The various device manufacturers have to negotiate with the various providers for rights to stream their media and the different devices support different providers. For example, with the Roku player, you can stream content from Netflix, Amazon Instant Video, Hulu Plus, and HBO GO. HBO GO is now available on the Fire TV and will be coming to the Fire TV stick in spring 2015. Google's Chromecast also includes content from their Google Play store. Apple TV does not support Amazon Instant Video, but does support iTunes.

Those are just the main premium content providers. Each device supports hundreds of other providers, but not all the same ones. So before you pick a device, you want to make sure it provides the content you want to watch.

Choosing how to get streaming TV

Required equipment

For any of the options, you will need:

- High-speed Internet (for instance, Verizon FIOS or Road Runner)
- An HDTV⁴ set
- An HDMI cable⁵

Considerations in deciding which device to get

Do you have

- An old-style CRT (picture tube) TV or an HDTV set?
 - If your TV has a CRT or if it only has composite video input, then you'll need to go with the Roku Express+.
- Do you mind tying your computer up with running your streaming TV, or will you want a device dedicated to the task?
 - Chromecast can stream anything your computer can display to your TV.
 - The tradeoff, though, is that your TV effectively becomes a monitor for your computer, so doing any work while you watch will put your work up on the TV screen as well.
- What video services will you want access to?
- What bells and whistles do you want?
 - For instance, some devices will take spoken input. Since using the remote can be clunky for entering text, this can be a real convenience.
- How much do you want to spend?

⁴ Older CRT TVs can work with Roku Express+.

⁵ Roku Express+ works with composite video cables or with HDMI.

Streaming media devices in a nutshell

				
Product	Amazon ⁶	Amazon ⁷	Chromecast ⁸	Roku ⁹
Models/Prices	Fire TV (~\$90)	Fire TV Stick (~\$40)	\$35.00	Roku Premiere (~\$80) Roku Express (~\$30) Roku Express+ (~\$35) Roku3 (~\$100)
Smart Capable	Yes			Yes
Interface	HDMI	HDMI	HDMI	HDMI ¹⁰
Wireless Standard	N Dual Band	N		N Dual Band
Instant Content Supported	Amazon Video, HBO GO, Hulu Plus, Netflix	Hulu Plus, Netflix, Prime Instant Video, YouTube	Whatever your computer can show you.	Amazon Video, HBO GO, Hulu Plus, Netflix

A couple other possibilities

- [Apple TV](http://disablemycable.com/apple-tv/) , <<http://disablemycable.com/apple-tv/>> (~\$150)
- Direct hookup of TV to computer , <<http://disablemycable.com/computer/>> (requires a smart TV)

A rich source of further information

[DisableMyCable.com](http://disablemycable.com) at <<http://disablemycable.com/>>. The links in the previous section are all to pages at [DisableMyCable.com](http://disablemycable.com), and the links in the next section all come from there.

6 <<http://disablemycable.com/blog/amazon-fire-tv/>>

7 <<http://disablemycable.com/blog/amazon-fire-tv/>>

8 <<http://disablemycable.com/blog/google-chromecast-better-apple-tv-roku/>>

9 <<http://disablemycable.com/roku/>>

10 The Roku Express+ provides both HDMI and composite output and thus can be used with analog TV sets.

Sites for free video (some of them require that you be a cable subscriber)¹¹

- **Broadcast Networks**
 - ABC, <<http://abc.go.com/shows>>
 - CBS, <<http://www.cbs.com/video/>>
 - CW, <<http://www.cwtv.com/cw-video/>>
 - Fox, <<http://www.fox.com/full-episodes/>>
 - NBC, <<http://www.nbc.com/video/full-episodes>>
 - PBS, <<http://video.pbs.org/>>
- **Video Index Sites**
 - Daily Motion, <<http://www.dailymotion.com/us>>
 - Mohu One, <<http://mohuone.com/>>
 - OV Guide, <http://www.ovguide.com/browse_tv?po=free>
 - Yahoo View, <<http://view.yahoo.com/>>¹²
- **Video Websites**
 - Diamond Club.TV, <<http://diamondclub.tv/>>
 - Docu Heaven, <<http://documentaryheaven.com/>>
 - Frequency, <<http://www.frequency.com/top>>
 - Go Flavor Go (Streaming), <<http://www.goflavorgo.com/>>
 - Pluto TV, <<http://pluto.tv/watch>>
 - PTA (Travel), <<http://thepta.com/>>
 - TED Talks, <<http://www.ted.com/>>
 - TV on YouTube, <<http://www.reddit.com/r/fulltvshowsonyoutube>>
 - Twit.TV, <<https://twit.tv/>>
 - Vevo Music, <<http://www.vevo.com/>>
 - Vimeo, <<http://vimeo.com/categories>>
 - You Tube, <<http://www.youtube.com/>>
- **Movies**
 - Classic Cinema, <<http://www.classiccinemaonline.com/>>
 - Crackle, <<http://www.crackle.com/>>
 - Open Culture, <<http://www.openculture.com/freemoviesonline/>>
 - Popcorn Flix, <<http://www.popcornflix.com/>>
 - Tubi TV, <<http://tubitv.com/>>
 - Vudu Movies, <http://www.vudu.com/movies/#typed_uientry/moviesOnUs>¹³
 - YouTube Movies, <<http://www.reddit.com/r/fullmoviesonyoutube/>>

11 Source for this list: *The Internet TV Remote Control* <<http://disablemycable.com/remote-control/>> at DisableMyCable.com.

12 Desktop only.

13 Free but requires you to set an account up.

- **Cable Networks**
 - A & E, <<http://www.aetv.com/video>>¹⁴
 - Adult Swim, <<http://video.adultswim.com/>>
 - AMG TV (Live!), <<http://www.amgtv.tv/>>
 - CMT, <<http://www.cmt.com/shows/>>
 - Comedy Central, <<http://www.comedycentral.com/>>
 - Comet TV Streaming, <<http://www.cometv.com/watch-live/>>
 - Discovery Go, <<https://www.discoverygo.com/free-preview-on-discovery/>>
 - Food Network, <<http://www.foodnetwork.com/food-network-full-episodes/videos/index.html>>
 - Free Form, <<http://freeform.go.com/shows>>¹⁵
 - HGTV, <<http://www.hgtv.com/full-episodes/package/index.html>>
 - History, <<http://www.history.com/videos>>¹⁶
 - iTBN, <<http://www.itbn.org/>>
 - MeTV, <<http://metvnetwork.com/videos/>>
 - MTV Music Videos, <<http://www.mtv.com/music/videos/>>
 - QVC Streaming, <<http://www.qvc.com/LiveShowDisplay>>
 - Show Time, <<http://www.sho.com/sho/video/full-episodes>>
 - Smithsonian, <<http://www.smithsonianchannel.com/full-episodes>>
 - Spike, <<http://www.spike.com/full-episodes/>>
 - TBN Streaming Requires email address, <<http://www.tbn.org/watch-us>>
 - TLC, <<http://www.tlc.com/videos/>>
 - Travel Channel, <<http://www.travelchannel.com/interests/hot-topics/articles/full-episodes>>
 - VH1, <<http://www.vh1.com/video/>>
- **Kid-Friendly**
 - Crunchy Roll, <<http://www.crunchyroll.com/videos/anime>>
 - Nickelodeon, <<http://www.nick.com/videos/full-episode-videos>>
 - Qubo, <<http://www.qubo.com/videos>>
 - TV Land, <<http://www.tvland.com/full-episodes>>
- **Sports/News/Politics**
 - Bloomberg Live stream!, <<http://www.bloomberg.com/tv/>>
 - CNN, <<http://www.cnn.com/video/>>¹⁷
 - Free Speech Live stream!, <<https://www.freespeech.org/>>
 - Intenu Live stream!, <<http://www.intenu.com/>>
- **Just cool!**
 - NASA TV Live stream!, <<http://www.nasa.gov/multimedia/nasatv/index.html>>

14 Many episodes require cable subscription.

15 Many episodes require cable subscription.

16 Many episodes require cable subscription.

17 Clips only.