

Tech Bytes: To Stream or Not to Stream

By: Becky Vess

Streaming TV is quickly becoming the most popular way to watch your favorite shows or movies. Many people have decided to ditch cable or satellite altogether and replace it with online streaming. It's actually a great option for young adults going off to college or just starting out on their own. Although, I'm not willing to give up my Satellite TV just yet, there are ways to add streaming services to your home and it be relatively inexpensive.



There are many devices on the market today that offer streaming content. You may even already have such a device in your home. If you own a Blu-ray player, SmartTV, or gaming console like Xbox or PlayStation, then you already have access to streaming apps like Netflix, Hulu Plus, Amazon, etc. If you don't have either of those, then there some devices you can buy and plug into your hdmi port on your TV.

One of the most popular devices is the Chromecast. It is small, inexpensive, usually around \$35, and easy to setup. The downside, there isn't a menu nor is there a remote. You'll need to control it with a smartphone, tablet or pc.

Next, we have Roku. Roku has many versions available on a set top box or on a streaming stick. The latest version is Roku 4. Roku 4 supports 4k content, and has an easy-to-use interface and comes with a remote. You'll get over 2500 channels, subscription based as well as free.

Amazon offers both a set top box streaming device as well as the Fire Stick (with or without remote). You get access to the popular apps, as well as their own Amazon Prime app. To use the Amazon app, you'll need to subscribe to Amazon Prime. For \$99 a year you get access to thousands of movies, shows and best of all, free shipping on many products bought from Amazon!

AppleTV is a set top box device that offers many apps or channels as well. It doesn't have 4k support, but you have Siri Voice control, and the interface is easy to learn.

Now, for the "techie" in your household, there is KodiTV. The software is free and all you have to do is download it from their site, www.kodi.tv. The software doesn't have any contents when you install it. To do anything in Kodi, you will need to install add-ons. For example, you can watch live TV on your computer by installing the live tv add-on. Setting up can be a little complicated, but once it's installed correctly you can watch live TV. The channels are limited, some work and some do not.

As long as you have internet access in your home, you can use any of the above devices to stream your favorite shows or movies.

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