



CUT THE CABLE

Essentials

"Cutting the cable" means trading a hardwired cable or satellite system for access to entertainment via the Internet. Use this guide to evaluate Internet-based streaming services and entertainment options.

PLEASE NOTE: WNPL does not promote or advertise for any specific service. Use the following information to make an informed choice.

SET A PRICE GOAL

Before choosing services, determine exactly how much to spend and stick to that price point. Include a budget for programming. Look at different combinations of services to get the most for your money.

SET A PROGRAMMING GOAL

Which shows and channels are a necessity? Make a list of channels and shows to keep, add, or discontinue, then choose services that meet this goal - it will save money over time.

EQUIPMENT ESSENTIALS

INTERNET ACCESS

Streaming requires a steady flow of Internet data. Users must have access to at least 5 mbps of data to stream services like Netflix successfully, and 20 mbps for high definition and sports programs (the faster the data speed, the better the viewing experience). Please check your Internet provider contract for high speed data limits -- many "unlimited" plans still have a maximum high speed limit, with surcharges for overages. Contact your provider for further data speed and data limit details. If you currently have an Internet and cable bundle, be sure to verify prices changes before dropping cable service.

BUY AN ANTENNA

An antenna is the most cost effective way to get local ABC, NBC, CBS, PBS, WGN, and UPN stations in our area. It is a one-time purchase that gives permanent, free access to local broadcasts. An antenna can cost \$20-\$100. See the Useful Websites list at the end of this guide for information on choosing an antenna.

DVR

A Digital Video Recorder (DVR) records broadcasts, shows, and movies for later viewing. Cloud DVRs store recordings via the Internet, while set-top DVRs store recordings on a physical device. Check out the links below for the pros and cons of each type of DVR. Set top DVRs can cost \$30-\$150, while a cloud DVR can cost \$6-230 per month (keep in mind, some streaming services include cloud DVR access).

SMART TVS & SMART PERIPHERAL DEVICES

"Smart" means any device that can access Internet data and display it on a TV, computer, or device screen. A smart TV will have streaming access to apps like Netflix, Amazon, Hulu, etc. Check peripheral devices, too, like DVD players, BluRay players, and game consoles, as many of those devices also provide smart access. Don't spend money on a new device if it isn't necessary.

ADD-ON SMART DEVICES

Add-on devices can turn a regular TV into a smart TV, and each provide access to different streaming services. Amazon Fire Stick, Chromecast, Apple TV, and Roku are all USB-style, plug-in devices that can be added to most TVs. Cost is between \$30-\$199 depending on the device and features, but most cost less than \$50.

Please Note: To utilize a specific streaming service, you must have access to that service through a smart device, and have a subscription to the service. Access to the service, and a subscription to the service, are both required. For example, to use Netflix, you need a smart device with access to the Netflix app, and you must purchase a subscription to Netflix. If your existing TV and peripherals do not provide access to a service, you will need to purchase an add-on device that includes the service, then subscribe to the service.

STREAMING SERVICES

The following services are available through apps and websites, via subscription. Check your app store or smart device for access. All prices are current estimates based on published prices. Please check with the provider for current pricing and terms of service, and be sure to look for free trial options for each service. Remember, most streaming services are a monthly subscription, not a contract. You can cancel your service at any time, and try something new.

Netflix (netflix.com)

Includes movies, documentaries, TV shows, and original content. Begins at \$9/mo for basic unlimited single user service, up through \$17.99/mo for high definition service with multiple users.

Amazon Prime

Prime includes an extensive catalog of free movies and TV shows, along with original Amazon content like *Fleabag* and *Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*. Prime users also have access to other movies and TV shows for rent or purchase, and subscriptions to other fee-based services. Please note: a Prime subscription also entitles users access to Amazon Music (an extensive catalog of free music), a free selection of Kindle books, and free 2-day Amazon Prime shipping. Prime is available on a monthly basis for \$12.99 or annually for \$119.

Hulu (hulu.com)

Hulu gives full access to shows from Fox, NBC, ABC, and The CW (does NOT include CBS). Hulu also includes original programming like *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Shrill*. Hulu with commercials is \$5.99/mo, \$11.99/mo commercial-free, and \$64.99/mo for live TV broadcasts and digital DVR access. Hulu service (with commercials) can be purchased in combination with Disney+ and ESPN+ for \$13.99/mo.

Sling (sling.com)

Sling is a basic cable replacement service with channels like HGTV, AMC, CNN, Lifetime, and A&E. There are three main package options: Orange includes multiple cable channels including ESPN and Disney Channel for \$35/mo, while Blue includes multiple cable channels including USA and the NFL Network for \$35/mo. Combine both Orange and Blue packages for \$50/mo and add channels like Showtime for \$10/mo.

Disney+ (disneyplus.com)

Disney+ provides access to a rotating collection of Disney, Marvel, Star Wars films, and original programming. Access includes shows like *The Simpsons* and *The Mandalorian*, along with National Geographic documentaries, all for \$7.99/mo or \$79.99/year (users can also bundle service with ESPN+ and Hulu for \$13.99/mo).

HBOMax (hbomax.com)

Watch all movies showing on HBO, and original content like *The Sopranos* and *Game of Thrones*. Available for \$14.99/mo as a stand-alone service, or it can be added on to services like Amazon Prime.

ESPN+ (us.espn.com)

Live sports plus original ESPN programming for the low price of \$6.99/mo (\$69.99/year). Bundle ESPN+ with Hulu (with commercials) and Disney+ for just \$13.99/mo.

Showtime (sho.com)

Watch all movies available on Showtime, and original content like *Homeland*, *Vice*, and *Penny Dreadful*. Available for \$10.99/mo as a stand-alone service, or can be added on to services like Amazon Prime, Hulu, or Sling.

Paramount+ (paramountplus.com) NEW

Watch all CBS, Paramount, BET, Comedy Central, MTV, and Smithsonian Channel programming like *A Quiet Place II* and *The Stand*, all for \$4.99/mo (\$49.99/year). Premium access without commercials is available for \$9.99/mo (\$99.99/year).

YouTube TV (tv.youtube.com)

YouTube TV is another cable replacement service, with over 70 popular broadcast and cable channels including CNN, FOX, Food Network, and AMC. YouTube TV also includes unlimited DVR access, 6 family accounts (with 3 simultaneous streams), and live streaming from any Internet-enabled device for \$64.99/mo. Get unlimited at-home streams and 4K streaming (when available) for \$84.99/mo.

FuboTV (fubo.tv)

Sports coverage with streaming can be tricky. FuboTV is geared toward sports fans, while also including basic cable access like TBS, IFC, CNN and FOX. FuboTV includes local sports and NBC Sports, CBS Sports, and ESPN with a host of Fubo-specific sports channels. Service also includes cloud DVR access, all for \$64.99. Multiple premium channel packages are also available.

STREAMING SERVICES cont.

Philo (philo.com)

Philo is a relatively new bargain streaming service with plenty to offer, with over 60 live and on-demand channels. A&E, AMC, BET, and Discovery Channel are just a few of the channels available. Users get 3 simultaneous streams and 10 separate user profiles for \$25/mo.

AppleTV+ (tv.apple.com)

Exclusive original programming from Apple, including The Morning Show (with Steve Carell and Jennifer Aniston), Defending Jacob, and The Banker. \$4.99/mo for up to 6 family members, including offline play and no commercials.

Vudu (vudu.com)

Vudu is a digital movie service with the most recent releases available for rent or purchase. Purchases are kept in your account and can be accessed from any device using the Vudu app. Prices range from \$2.99 to \$9.99 per rental, with some in-theater releases now available for \$20-\$30. Movies can be permanently purchased for \$6-\$30, depending on the film, and there is a large selection of FREE movies (with commercials).

Sundance Now (sundancenow.com)

Sundance Now brings you the best of the Sundance Network, plus movies, documentaries, and original programming. Available as a monthly subscription for \$6.99/mo, or annually for \$59.99.

Acorn TV (acorntv.com)

If you love British TV shows, this is the channel for you! Watch BBC and SKY classics like Doc Martin, The Secret Agent, Hamish Macbeth, Midsomer Murders, and more, commercial free, for \$5.99/mo.

Criterion Channel (criterionchannel.com)

A collection of contemporary and classic art films and documentaries, "thematically presented" -- Criterion groups films like Raging Bull and Rocky for a truly immersive experience. Over 1,000 titles available, with monthly access for \$10.99/mo or an annual subscription for \$99.99.

Broadway HD (broadwayhd.com)

Missing the stage? Broadway HD offers full-length theatrical productions, commercial free. See such classics as The King and I, Miss Saigon, and Macbeth from the comfort of home. \$8.99/mo, or \$99.99 annually.

MetOpera On Demand

(metopera.org/season/on-demand)

Stream over 700 recorded Met performances from the last 40 years, including greats like Pavarotti and Placido Domingo. Monthly subscriptions are \$14.99/mo or \$149.99 annually.

Peacock (peacocktv.com)

NBC's new on-demand streaming service launched in April 2020, with limited free access with commercials. Premium access to all NBC programming (with commercials) is available for \$4.99/mo or \$39.99/year, and Premium Plus access (full programming, with commercial-free recorded streaming) is \$89.99 annually.

Britbox (britbox.com/us) NEW

Britbox provides programming straight from the BBC and includes classics like Absolutely Fabulous, The Office (with Ricky Gervais), and Keeping Up Appearances. \$6.99/mo or \$69.99/year after a free 7-day trial.

"INCLUDED" SERVICES

Many cellular/wireless plans have access to streaming services via your current service plan. AT&T cell customers get free HBO with an Unlimited Elite cell service package. T-Mobile subscribers get Netflix for free, and Verizon customers get Disney+ included with their cell packages. It pays to check your current services!

FREE STREAMING SERVICES

Check your app store for access, or use these services via their websites.

Peacock (peacocktv.com)

This service from NBC offers free basic access to programs.

Vudu (vudu.com)

Vudu has a good selection of free movies with commercials, with new options added regularly.

Crackle (crackle.com)

Crackle is a free streaming service with an extensive list of movies and TV shows. Find movies like *Passion of the Christ* or *Star Trek: First Contact*, and TV shows like *All In The Family*. Free to use with registration.

TubiTV (tubi.tv)

TubiTV provides free streaming access to thousands of movies and TV shows, including *The Conjuring*, *The Bachelor*, *Shrek Forever After* and *Hell's Kitchen*. Free to use with registration.

Popcornflix (popcornflix.com)

This resource is great for B-movies and lesser known flicks like *Rare Exports*, with a sprinkling of A-lister films like *We Need to Talk About Kevin* and *I'm Still Here*.

PlutoTV (pluto.tv)

PlutoTV is like a live TV Guide - scroll through the website or app to see what is playing now across hundreds of channels, including news, sports, and commercial free movies. See such classics as *Funny Face* and *Mac and Me*, with shows changing daily.

PLEX (plex.tv) NEW

Access over 20,000 movies and TV shows with Plex's free streaming service. Premium access, including offline viewing and the ability to download videos, is available with a premium subscription for \$4.99/mo (but regular streaming access is free, with registration).

YouTube (youtube.com)

The most well known video sharing site in the world, YouTube offers enough free entertainment to keep anyone busy. Watch movie and TV show clips, original vlogs and movies, and even full-length shows like *Mystery Science Theater 3000*. YouTube is free for general access, with YouTube premium offering commercial free access for \$11.99/mo.

Hoopla

Free from WNPL, Hoopla has an extensive catalog of movies, music, and books for download. Install the app, sign in using your Warren Newport Public Library card, and start streaming.

USEFUL WEBSITES

Tom's Guide - Cut the Cord (tomsguide.com)

Tom's Guide features tech help of all kinds, and features one of the most comprehensive cord cutting articles available. Tons of great info on the technical aspects of streaming entertainment, including antennas and other hardware. Search "Cut the Cord" on Tom's Guide for the most up to date information available.

CNet (cnet.com/ott/) *APP AVAILABLE*

Another great technical resource, CNet's streaming TV directory provides extensive service and hardware reviews. Especially useful for DVR reviews (set-top and cloud based).

Cord Cutters News (cordcuttersnews.com)

A site made just for cord cutters! Advice, equipment and service recommendations, and step-by-step guides for streaming entertainment are all available here.

AntennaWeb (antennaweb.org)

This site is a unique resource for determining what kind of antenna you may need. Type in an address and AntennaWeb will calculate the number of stations and signal strength that you can expect from a home antenna. This site also recommends antenna types based on your signal strength, and has cord cutters guides too.

On TV Tonight (ontvtonight.com) *APP AVAILABLE*

On TV Tonight shows all scheduled programming from regular broadcast and cable channels, as well as streaming services -- an easy way to see what's playing, and where. This is a great resource to check out when choosing streaming services!

Consumer Reports' How To Decide If Cord Cutting Is Right For You

(consumerreports.org/streaming-media/how-to-decide-if-cord-cutting-is-right-for-you/)

A comprehensive guide to the good and bad aspects of cutting the cord.



Warren-Newport Public Library

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