

How Online Streaming Services Have Changed the Way We Enjoy Television

Online streaming has provided us with loads of possibilities. We can now watch what we want, how we want and whenever we want. We no longer have to purchase expensive CDs, DVDs and, more recently, BDs (Blu-Ray discs); in order to enjoy our favourite movies and television shows. The days of having to subscribe to network cable providers are well and truly over. There are so many different alternatives that will give you your “entertainment fix”.

For those of you that are unfamiliar with online streaming, it is, in a nutshell, [defined by the BBC](#) as:

“Listening to music or watching video in 'real time', instead of downloading a file to your computer and watching it later. With internet videos and webcasts of live events, there is no file to download, just a continuous stream of data.”

So there you have it! Here is a comprehensive list of online streaming services that will, hopefully, cater to your needs.

Cloudload



Cloudload Logo

Now the vast majority of people reading this will have never heard of this online streaming platform. In essence, Cloudload combines the best of both Hulu and Netflix. And how so? It is the ultimate cloud-based streaming website that allows one to watch movies, television programmes, listen to music, as well as view documents, be it on computer, television or any mobile device. As the platform works across multiple devices, users can, for example, download a movie to their account from their smartphone and watch it later on their television when they get home. What's more is that you get to save all that valuable storage space on your computer, tablet or mobile device as the video content doesn't have to be downloaded to your system.

Better yet, users don't have to endure tons of unwanted commercial advertisements that interrupt the video sequence. So you can watch what you want with no annoying advertisements to disrupt your viewing experience. Simply download a movie or television series of your choosing to your Cloudload folder, press play and enjoy!



Cloudload search engine

What makes this platform stand tall is its massive selection of content. Through the Cloudload search engine, users can access almost any website that hosts music and movie files. Furthermore, the search engine finds numerous relevant results, which you can see in the image above.

The platform offers four different subscription plans, each with varying storage space allocations. For slightly less than \$5 a month, users get 10GB of storage. There are also 50GB, 100GB and 200GB allocations if users need more storage.

Free Trial – No.

Pricing – ranges from \$4.98 per month to \$49.98 per month

Hulu

Hulu Plus is the premium version of Hulu. Users can watch their favourite shows on any device. The platform is widely regarded as having a great selection of current television programmes. For instance, the service provides access to shows on ABC, FOX and other cable networks. Hulu Plus also provides BBC content in the United States.

The company's major selling point appears to be the availability of new television shows. Many shows have their episodes on Hulu Plus a day after the shows originally air on television.

The major downside of this platform is that even with a paid subscription of Hulu Plus, you have to endure the frequent television commercials, although they are far fewer than if the same programmes were watched via cable television.

Another drawback is that Hulu Plus is only available to people living in the United States and Japan. There are however, plans to expand into more countries in future. Despite these restrictions in place, if you're "tech savvy" enough, you can still access Hulu from anywhere in the world through the use of a virtual private network (VPN).

Free Trial – Yes. 7 days for Hulu Plus.

Pricing – regular Hulu is free whereas Hulu Plus costs \$7.99 per month or \$95.88 per year

Home Box Office



HBO Logo

HBO provides two streaming services, called HBO Now and HBO Go. The latter is exclusively for cable customers who pay a premium each month to receive HBO on their cable system. The content on both services is largely identical.

HBO Now was recently introduced and is designed for people without cable television. It is available on Apple devices and is billable through Apple. This means automatic monthly payment via an iTunes-connected credit or debit card. The application itself is laid out very well, and is simple to use.

If you're looking to get into the popular series called Game of Thrones, and to avoid all future spoilers, then this is the platform for you. You can easily binge watch through the previous seasons and catch up to the latest one.

Each month HBO updates its content, with several fairly new movies released. The biggest advantage though, is in HBO's original programming. While you won't be able to stream brand new TV shows live, you can stream them at essentially the same time they air through traditional satellite and cable.

Unfortunately, this platform isn't yet available in the UK, so if you're desperate, you'll have to resort to using DNS proxies and VPNs.

Free Trial – Yes. 30 days for HBO Now.

Pricing - \$14.99 per month for HBO Now

Sling TV



Sling TV Logo

This platform is a cheaper alternative to cable TV. Despite the fact that a monthly subscription fee is paid, there is no binding contract and set-top box rental fee.

The content on offer is pretty reasonable, as users can enjoy channels such as ESPN, CNN, Cartoon Network, TBS and the Food Network. You can even purchase HBO for an additional cost.

The platform doesn't give you unlimited access to past shows however, but you can watch many programs for at least a few days after they've aired.

Free Trial – Yes. 7 days.

Pricing - \$20 per month

Amazon Prime Instant Video

In this age of technology, a lot of us do our shopping online, and on Amazon. Therefore, a strong argument can be made for the purchase of Amazon Prime, which gives users free two-day shipping on purchases, a free Kindle book each month, as well as unlimited access to both Amazon Music and Amazon Prime Instant Video.

Below is a short clip, published in March 2014, which details what you need to know about Amazon Prime Instant Video.

(VIDEO 1 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i23SKYU67_4)

The platform does have a good selection of content, with programmes like Downton Abbey, Vikings, Alpha House and a host of other blockbusters. In addition, Amazon Instant Video also offers unlimited access to HBO classics such as The Sopranos and The Wire. Not bad if you ask me!

Furthermore, the platform doesn't suggest television shows and movies based on things that viewers have enjoyed before. This may be a welcome change for various viewers as the recommendations on other streaming platforms tend to be inaccurate.

Free Trial – Yes. 30 days.

Pricing - £79 per year (with Amazon Prime benefits) or flat £5.99 per month

Netflix

I'm pretty sure that most of you reading this were expecting me to begin by talking about Netflix. Well, in all honesty, I decided to save the best for last. In my opinion, Netflix trumps all other online streaming platforms. The content is simply top notch, as shown by the video below.

(VIDEO 1- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GvQs89U_tV0)

Netflix is one of the few streaming platforms to offer 4K video streaming (Ultra HD streaming). Users can also watch their favourite shows on different devices, such as on Smart TVs, video consoles such as PlayStation and Xbox, tablets, computers and mobile phones.

The service is also available in [a number of different countries](#).

Free Trial – Yes. 30 days.

Pricing – Basic (£5.99 per month), Standard (£7.49 per month), Premium (£8.99 per month)

Other notable mentions include Google Play, iTunes and YouTube.

This has been quite a lengthy post. But I hope you all enjoyed it. Let me know of your thoughts in the comments section below.

Thanks for reading,

Samuel.