

Cord Cutting 2020



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Ungerleider's Theory on Cord Cutting

If your reason for exploring Streaming plus OTA is to save money, you will be disappointed.

The reason to choose streaming over cable/satellite TV is to control your content and options.

Borrowing Terminology

Cable companies use various terms like Basic, Premium, Bundles, and On-Demand.

For our purposes we will look at various streaming providers and how they compare to the packages a cable provider might have. Prices listed in the slides are per month. (Some services have annual rates at a discount.)

OTA is a must

Remember that if you are streaming content you will need an antenna and tuner to watch local broadcast channels. Over the Air (OTA) is a vital component of most cord cutting scenarios.

Replacing the basic cable bundle

With a basic cable subscription you get a large number of channels dictated by the cable company. There are several streaming services that provide most of the same channels as your basic cable subscription. (Some even include local channels.)

One of these services is most likely to be the core subscription of your setup. Currently there are two tiers of service with corresponding differences in price points.

Tier 1: Full Basic Cable replacement



Hulu + Live TV: Provides around 70 Channels including most news, sports and entertainment channels you'll find on entry tier cable package. Majority owner: Disney
Price: \$54.99



YouTube TV: Advertises 70+ channels. Like Hulu + Live TV it contains the usual channels. The line up is a little different from Hulu so you'll want to check which channel selection is more to your liking. Owner: Google
Price: \$49.99

Tier 1A - Full line up, sort of...



AT&T TV Now (Formerly DirectTV Now): Expensive service has 50+ channels including HBO. The “Plus” package starts at \$65. The Max package adds Cinemax and a few other channels for \$80.



fuboTV: The service bills itself as the best service sports fans, but doesn’t include the ESPN family of channels. The \$59.99 Family plan on the site claims 111 Channels. The Ultra plan at \$74.99 lists 179 channels including Showtime.

Tier 2: Limited channels, Lower Costs



Owned by Dish Network, Sling was the one of the first live TV streaming services. It comes in two flavors: Orange and Blue. The difference between the two \$30 packages is the channel lineup. If you want some of each you can combine them for \$45.



For the budget conscious viewer there is Philo. With a single \$20 package they provide 58 channels. What's missing for this price are sports channels and the big network cable channels. (no ESPN, Fox Sports (including local) or Turner channels like CNN, TNT or TBS). If the channels they carry are ones you like then it's a good basic package.

Smart TV + Live Bundle

We use Philo as our live bundle. For the most part we watch a handful of the stations carried more than others. With the Philo subscription we can use the Roku apps for those channels directly and bypass Philo's somewhat cumbersome interface. We can still go to Philo for other channels.

Channels that we have “broken out” include: Food Network, Animal Planet, History Channel, Travel Channel, and BBC America. Streaming Live on these Roku channels requires “activation” against your bundle provider.



On Demand Services

This is where the concept of streaming over cable or satellite has its real value. You get to design your own package with the services that provide access to the shows and movies you want access to. I will provide an example combination based on our current setup at home.



Rakuten VIKI

hulu



Our “package”

Live Streaming “basic” package: **Philo**

Subscription general services: **Netflix, Hulu, Britbox, CBS All Access**

“Free” services: **Crackle, Tubi TV, NBC News, Pet Collective**

Specialty Services

Britbox or AcornTV: access to British comedy and drama series

Viki: Asian TV - Korean, Chinese, Japanese and more

Crunchyroll: A channel that features all things Anime

The Pet Collective: A channel that shows animal videos

Roku has a tool for people to build channels. One example is the National Parks Channel.

Network owned services

The biggest service to drop in 2019 has certainly been Disney+. Disney's new service attracted 10 million subscribers in the first day in November.

Disney bundle: Disney has also announced a bundle that includes Disney+, the “standard” version of Hulu and ESPN+.

This is similar to what CBS does with its All Access service.

NBC's upcoming Peacock streaming service promises a similar situation.

In all of these cases the network (or parent company) keeps control in the streaming environment.

Conclusions

I mentioned at the beginning that it's not lower costs that is the biggest thing that going from cable/satellite to streaming gets you. It's control. If you want to “roll your own” variety of services then streaming gives you that option.

We've only scratched the surface of available services. Particularly in the Roku environment there is probably a channel for whatever interest you have. This is the real value of cord cutting.