

Streaming Film and TV Services over the Internet

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All prices quoted in this article are correct as at the date this article was created

Having a very fast gigabit broadband service opens up the possibility of saving money by replacing things like Sky TV with services that stream directly over your broadband connection. What's more, a gigabit broadband connection is future-proof and can easily stream movies and TV at 8K picture quality and beyond. Streaming services allow you to watch things not only on your TV but also on your computer, laptop, tablet and mobile phone - and you get to choose what to watch and when you want to watch it, otherwise known as "on demand" viewing. Below is a list of popular streaming services, what they offer and their typical price. As you'll see - even if you subscribed to several services you can still end up paying far less than you would for a satellite TV subscription, yet end up with more choice!

For example, a Sky TV package that includes the Sky Cinema and Sky Sports channels will cost you in excess of £60 per month and you are tied in to an 18 month contract. In comparison, you could subscribe to Netflix, Amazon, Disney+ and BT Sport and still only pay around £48 per month and not be tied in to any contract.

Streaming Service	Type of content	Price
	Massive range of films, boxed sets and tv shows plus lots of original content.	£8.99 per month to watch in HD quality. £11.99 per month to watch in 4K quality.
	Incredible value for money - an annual subscription includes the following features plus more: Massive range of films, boxed sets and tv shows plus lots of original content. FREE next day delivery on thousands of products ordered through Amazon. Unlimited storage of digital photos (a great way to back up your photos) Access to listen to over 2 million songs through Amazon	£79 per year or £7.99 per month.

	<p>music.</p> <p>Access to over 1000 e-books, magazines and comics.</p>	
	<p>Launched in March 2020 and great for families, the Disney+ service offers EVERY Disney movie and TV show that exists - this also includes the Marvel, Pixar and Star Wars film franchises as well as the National Geographic channel.</p>	<p>£5.99 per month or £60 per year.</p>
	<p>Launched in the UK in 2019 - this is a joint venture between BBC and ITV to try and rival the likes of Netflix and Amazon - this service offers classic British TV Shows and films.</p>	<p>£5.99 per month</p>
	<p>This service is actually owned by Sky TV - it offers a range of "Passes" that give you access to different types of content with no contract - you can pick and choose what passes you'd like and just pay a monthly fee. It effectively allows you to only pay for the bits of Sky TV you like without paying for all the bits you never watched - and of course no satellite dish is needed!</p>	<p>"Entertainment Pass" Access to over 300 boxed sets from various Sky channels. £8.99 per month</p> <p>"Sky Cinema Pass" Access to over 1000 movies from Sky Cinema. £11.99 per month</p> <p>"Kids Pass" Access to thousands of ad-free childrens shows. £3.99 per month</p> <p>"Sky Sports Pass" Access to 11 Sky Sports channels. £33.99 per month</p>
	<p>Offers a range of sports to watch including EVERY Premier League football match</p>	<p>£25 per month. No contract - cancel whenever you want. All sports are streamed in 4K picture quality.</p>

Supplementary TV Channel Subscription Services

Quite often, people stick with their existing satellite TV service because there are one or two channels in particular that they like to watch - but as these are often bundled into a package of channels they usually cost more. Nowadays however, many individual TV channels can be accessed over streaming services at a cheaper price. This is where it is worth doing some research to find out if the channels you like can be accessed from other streaming services.

For example, the Discovery Channel is only available through Sky TV as part of a bundle - however if you have Amazon Prime you can add the Discovery Channel for £4.99 a month. This “pick and mix” approach could end up saving you quite a bit of money - but only if you are willing to do the research!

What are “Smart” TVs?

A “smart” TV is simply a term used to describe a modern TV that is capable of directly connecting to the internet via your broadband router (usually via a wifi signal but can also be via an ethernet cable directly plugged in to your router). Smart TVs often have certain streaming services built in to them for convenience. For example, some TV remote controls have a “Netflix” button and pressing it will immediately display the Netflix menu listing all the movies and tv shows available for viewing (assuming you have already set up a subscription to the service which is usually easiest done from a computer). If you buy a TV today it will almost certainly have the built-in ability to connect to the internet, giving you the ability to enjoy any of the streaming services listed above.

I don't have a Smart TV - what can I do?

Google has you covered! Even if your TV is a few years old and cannot directly connect to the internet, so long as your TV has a HDMI socket you can purchase a device called a “Google Chromecast” for £30. Many places sell these including Currys / PC World. This device can plug into the HDMI socket of your TV and allows it to connect to the internet. It looks like this:



It basically communicates with your router over Wi-Fi and sends the images through the HDMI socket to be displayed on your TV.

Note - A Wi-Fi signal strength diminishes the further away from the broadband router you are. Depending on where your TV (and/or Google Chromecast) is situated in your house, it may not be able to pick up the wifi signal well enough. When possible, use a CAT6 ethernet cable to connect devices directly to your router. This will give the router better performance and offload traffic from the Wi-Fi so that Wi-Fi only devices have better connection speeds. Before purchasing a Google Chromecast or Smart TV, check what speed you can get at the TV's / Chromecast's location in your house using some other Wi-Fi device. You can use the Ookla speed test app at <https://www.speedtest.net/> to check the speed. You need to ensure you are getting at least 25MBps for the Google Chromecast or a Smart TV to work well over Wi-Fi.

What's the difference between HD, 4K, 8K ?

Most people are probably aware by now of what HD means as the term has been around for many years - it basically gives you a sharper picture quality and has become pretty much the standard way to view movies and TV these days.

A 4K image just improves things again - for each "dot" that makes up an HD image - a 4K image will split each dot into 4 smaller dots - thus allowing you to see even more detail. Most of today's streaming services now offer the ability to view 4K movies and if you buy a new Smart TV today it will probably support 4K. Certainly if you have a gigabit broadband service and you are looking to get a new TV you should be thinking of getting one that supports 4K because that will become the norm in the near future.

You can in fact already buy TVs that support 8K (although they are still thousands of pounds) and, as you've probably guessed, an 8K image takes each dot in a 4K image and splits it into 4 even smaller dots! Many of you have probably walked into a Currys/ PC World store and stared in wonder at some of the images being produced by their large-screen TVs - some of the bigger screens will be 8K. No streaming service yet supports streaming movies at 8K picture quality (if you think about it an 8K movie is 16 times as detailed as an HD movie meaning 16 times as much data needs to be streamed over your internet connection). Most people's internet is not that fast - but a gigabit broadband connection will have no trouble streaming 8K, 12K and beyond. You can test this for yourself because YouTube does have videos filmed at 8K and even 12K and if you try to view them, you will find playback will begin instantly over a gigabit connection with no problems.

However, if you are in the market for a new TV, unless you have thousands of pounds of spare cash to spend - I would recommend getting a far more affordable 4K smart TV which will still give absolutely stunning picture quality.