

## Cutting the Cord

Instructor: Sean Luster

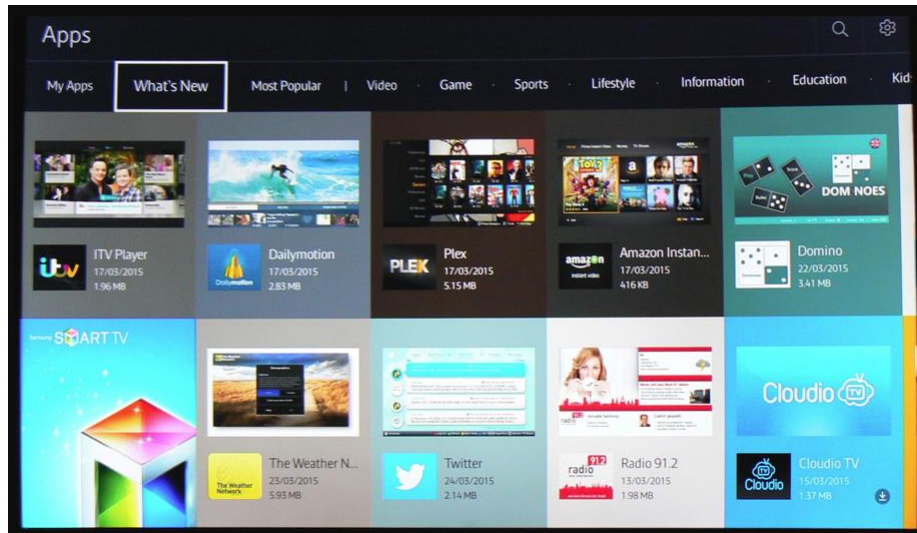
### Overview

Cable prices have been increasing at four times the rate of inflation at the same time as changes in technology have given us more options than ever. This has led to more and more people looking for alternatives to cable or satellite TV. For those who choose to cut the cord and use other options the average savings of \$115.33/month. Of course there are other changes too; for example, they typically go from ~239 channels to ~40, and the simplicity of using a DVR or having everything controlled with one remote is typically lost. In class today we'll discuss the options that are available, what equipment is needed to consider cutting the cord, and other factors to help determine if it's the right option for you.

### Technical Requirements

- High-speed Internet/Wi-Fi - questions to ask....
  - What download speeds can I expect? Most internet providers will clearly advertise the top speeds they offer. What you will mostly want to pay attention to is the download speeds as this is what will determine if you can easily stream things like Sling TV or Netflix.
  - Is the internet cable or DSL/fiber? Cable internet speeds have a tendency to fluctuate significantly depending on the time of day. DSL and fiber internet are much more stable and reliable.
  - Is there a data cap on you plans? In an effort to combat cord cutting, many ISPs have recently started putting a cap on how much data users can download each month. If you go above the data cap, you'll get charged with an extra fee. Ideally, you should choose an internet service that doesn't have a data cap
  - Are there any additional costs? The advertised price might not be all that you'll have to pay for service. Some ISPs will require you to rent a modem or router from them, adding fees to your monthly bill.
  - Is this an introductory deal? Is the price being advertised just an introductory offer? If so, when will your monthly internet bill increase and by how much?

- SmartTV



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- Ports



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- Your smart TV will have many of the same input options of any modern TV (S-Video, Component, optical sound, coaxial) but the big additions are HDMI and USB ports.
- When shopping for a TV you want to be aware of the number of these ports available and their physical location
- Streaming Device
  - Many Smart TVs sold today will offer built in Wi-Fi connectivity, allowing the TV to connect directly to the Internet, but others will require external connections. These are typically HDMI dongles. Some examples include:
    - Roku
    - Amazon Fire Stick
    - Chrome Cast
    - Apple TV
- Replacing a home phone?
  - Several options available, Magic Jack is <\$50/year

## Benefits of Cutting the Cord

- \$\$\$
- Choice in entertainment
- Contract flexibility
- Exclusive content

## Downsides

- Increased complexity
- DVR Options exist, but are less intuitive
- Subject to Internet speeds, traffic restrictions
- Subject to changing licenses for media products

## Options

So what are you going to watch? Well there are a lot of different options out there. Some services aim to be an ala cart version of cable, just giving you 20-40 channels instead of hundreds. Others provide content from specific channels (HBO, CBS, etc.) Still others provide their own original content. We'll talk about a few examples from each category and how they differ.

- Services to replace Cable TV
  - Sling TV
  - DirectTV Now
  - fuboTV
  - YouTube TV
  - Hulu Live
- Specialty Entertainment options
  - Netflix
  - Amazon Prime^
  - YouTube
  - HBO Go
  - Hulu\*
- Other Smart TV apps
  - Google Photos
  - Pandora
  - Accu Weather
  - CNBC stock updates
  - Skype
  - Endless others....
- Upcoming
  - Disney+
    - \$6.99/month--Roku/PS4—content from library

## **DVR**

One of the best aspects of modern television watching is being able to watch things later and fast forward through commercials. Often streaming services lose a bit of that convenience but more and more including a DVR style storage system for shows is becoming an option for cord cutters. We'll talk about some of the alternatives here.

- Streaming services offering Cloud DVR options
- 3<sup>rd</sup> party DVR devices attached to TV (e.g. TiVo)
- Antenna/DVR combos ([www.freeair.tv](http://www.freeair.tv))

## **Casting**

Ever want to watch something that was on your laptop and phone and think it would be nice to have on your TV? Now that's can be a surprisingly easy process using any of a number of casting tools.

- ChromeCast
- MiraCast
- AppleTV
- Roku

## **Resources**

<https://www.cutcabletoday.com/>

<https://www.rokuguide.com/channels/apps>