

At first, there was one

I've complained about this before, but the way "the industry" is going about implementing streaming is so counter-intuitive to customers I'm afraid we may actually be worse off as consumers far sooner than I originally anticipated.

When the trend began, and Netflix was the monopoly of thought leadership on the topic, we had positive momentum in giving consumers real choice. Netflix negotiated strong deals and generally kept their prices for unlimited streaming in check despite growing expenses, and in the end they grew at breakneck speed and the consumer generally won.

Those who insisted on having the old TV experience could (and still can) maintain their norms, and those damn millennials can binge their commercial free shows on their silly devices.

Then there were three

However, times change, and over time Hulu (Hulu is owned by Hulu LLC, a joint venture with **The Walt Disney Company** (holds 60% stake), **Comcast** (via **NBCUniversal**; holds 30% stake), and **AT&T** (via WarnerMedia; holds 10% stake), and Amazon joined the party and then there was competition to *really* keep the prices in check.

In reality, most Amazon Prime Video users were really already in just for the free shipping, but it was most definitely an added bonus, even though up until the last couple years the content offerings were mere duplicates of Netflix at best.

Hulu on the other hand I've always viewed as a compromise, where we're watching "real" TV with commercials (unless paying the premium subscription) but not able to "binge" as has become the norm.

THEN... HBO Now or HBO Go or HBO whatever came out and that was a damn lifesaver, because previously you couldn't watch Game of Thrones unless you had the privilege of a Comcast subscription.

Now, we're just screwed

With the impending launch of Disney+, consumers must choose between a Comcast subscription which runs anywhere from \$59 to upwards of \$200 depending on the absurd range of channels and “features” you opt for, OR between any number of a soon-to-be-countless streaming options.

Netflix (and Amazon, and Hulu) no longer has access to Marvel or Disney properties, so anyone with kids will need Disney+. Netflix however is the de-facto comedy special monopoly, and along with Amazon Prime Video the two offer fantastic custom pseudo-exclusive content.

Now, for my family of four to have a well rounded selection of content our choice is a Comcast subscription for \$99/month with HBO, or to subscribe to each service we would get the same relevant level of content from:

HBO Go - \$15

Netflix - \$13

Hulu - \$8

Amazon Prime Video - \$9

Disney+ - \$15?

Today, it's still a pretty obvious decision, particularly if you are already “unplugged,” but the problem is we have embarked upon the most dangerous of slippery slopes here, and it's only a matter of time before every content producer has their own streaming service. Which will devolve into every channel and content producer having their own service, which will eventually aggregate back to a single provider (Comcast) allowing you to pick which channels you want in your “streaming package.”

I don't have a solution, but damn does it irritate me, and complaining about it here helps me feel a little better about it.