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ISSUE 79 AUGUST 2018 TECHLIFER TECHLIFER APPLE NEWSSTAND & GOOGLE PLAY



PLUS

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BIG SCREENS FOR SMALL SPACES

10
LAPTOPS & 2-IN-1s
LIGHTWEIGHT, TOUCHSCREENS & 4K DISPLAYS



HOW TO BE A MEDIA STREAMING EXPERT

Netflix vs Stan vs Foxtel (vs everything else)
> Free your files: best NAS boxes rated & compared <



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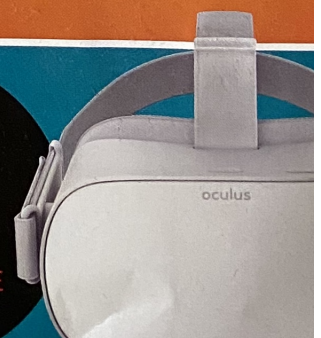
FUTURE

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SIMPLE TWEAKS AND EASY STEPS TO MAKE WINDOWS FRESH AGAIN

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ESSENTIAL REVIEWS
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[SUPERGUIDE]

Your video streaming services guide

WHETHER YOU'RE AFTER A SERIES TO BINGE, MOVIE TO CRITIQUE OR DOCO TO ABSORB, AS LONG AS YOU HAVE AN INTERNET CONNECTION, WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED.

[GEORGIA DIXON]

IN THE SPACE of a few short years, Australia has gone from enviously watching on as the US and UK flaunted Netflix, Hulu, Amazon Prime, BBC iPlayer and more to becoming absolutely spoilt for choice ourselves. Not only do all the major free-to-air networks now have their own video on demand (VoD) offerings, but we also have myriad subscription streaming services vying for our hard-earned dollars.

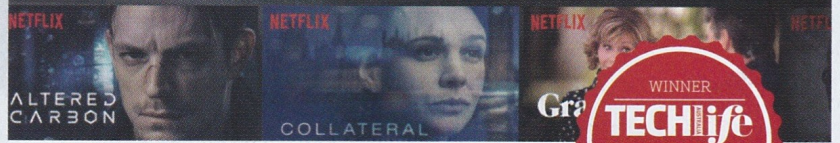
And Aussies have certainly taken to streaming culture. According to Deloitte's 2017 Media Consumer Survey, subscriptions to paid VoD services such as Netflix and Stan surpassed Pay TV subscriptions for the first time last year, and 32% of us are subscribed to more than one premium service.

So with such a multitude of services to choose from, it can be difficult to know where to start. From content and user experience to cost and value for money, we're taking a look at what each major player brings to the table to help you make the right choice.

Whether you're a film buff, TV junkie or doco nerd, there's something for every taste and budget so you can binge watch to your heart's content. The official websites for each service will offer instructions on how to set them up on your device. You'll be able to watch on your laptop, there's an associated app for your smartphone and tablet, and many modern TVs (in the last three years or so) even have their own apps, too.

HOW WE TESTED

All streaming services were tested using each platform's respective app on an iPhone 8 and iPad Air 2, both running iOS 11, as well as Google Chrome on a MacBook Pro running macOS High Sierra and streaming video to Google Chromecast. Tests were conducted using both a 4G mobile connection and ADSL2+.



Netflix

THE BUDGET-FRIENDLY ORIGINAL.

THE US STREAMING giant has quickly become a staple in Australian homes, with more than a third of us using the platform, according to a 2017 report by Roy Morgan.

Netflix's edge over the competition is its extensive catalogue of original and exclusive content — think *Orange is the New Black*, *Stranger Things*, *Black Mirror*, *Jessica Jones* and *Making a Murderer*. It's got a good blend of both classic and new films, TV shows and documentaries, including a handful of Aussie favourites like *Rake* and *Mad Max*, as well as a healthy selection of foreign language films and TV series.

In terms of user experience, Netflix is easily the best service on offer. The website and app are easy to use, and each account comes with five 'profiles', so each person in the family (or, more likely, each person mooching off their mate's account) can personalise their experience.

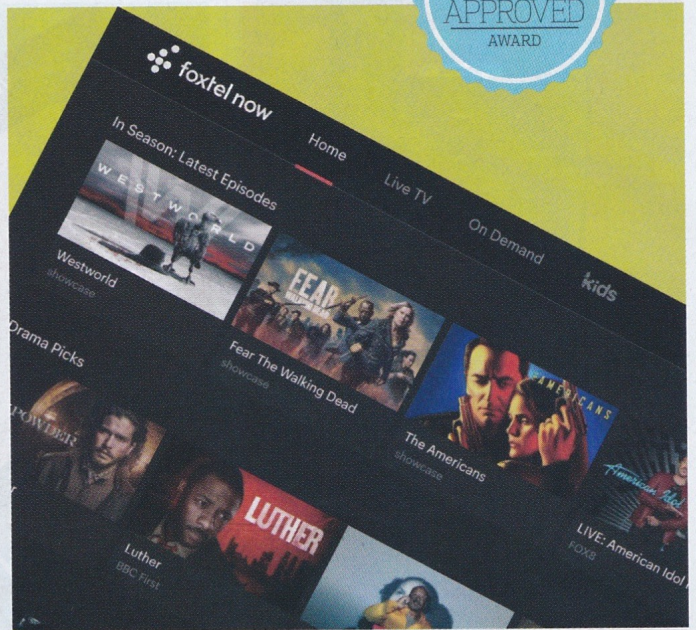
The basic plan will set you back just \$9.99 per month, but only allows streaming in standard definition and use of one screen at a time. Upgrading to \$13.99 per month will get you HD access and an extra screen to use simultaneously (perfect for families or couples who can't agree on what to watch). For \$17.99, you'll get up to 4K definition and another two screens.



NETFLIX
\$9.99–\$17.99 per month (one-month free trial)
www.netflix.com/au

CRITICAL SPECS
Minimum download speed: 0.5Mbps; Maximum screen resolution: up to 4K;
Devices: Mac, PC, iOS, Android, Chromecast, Apple TV, Telstra TV, Fetch TV, PlayStation 3 and 4, Xbox 360 and One, Wii and Wii U;
Titles: 4,000+; Ability to watch offline: Yes

NETFLIX



Stan

HOME-GROWN CONTENT AND INTERNATIONAL FAVOURITES.

BEFORE NETFLIX EVEN made it to our shores, Stan had already amassed an impressive subscribership. Nowadays, it's fallen into second place but still reportedly boasts almost one million customers.

There's a couple thousand fewer titles than the US giant, but the programs Stan does have might just beat out its main competition. The first subscription streaming service to offer original Australian programming (*No Activity* and *Wolf Creek*), Stan also has exclusive rights to *Better Call Saul*, *UnREAL*, the *Twin Peaks* and *Will and Grace* reboots and more, many episodes of which are released within hours of the US.

The service also features an impressive library of kids' content, including favourites like *Adventure Time* and *Dora the Explorer*, making it the best pick for young families.

Stan offers three subscription levels, starting from \$10 for basic access, which only allows streaming in SD and only one device can watch content at a time. For \$12, you'll get HD and another two screens to stream simultaneously, while \$15 per month offers 4K and four screens. Like Netflix, Stan allows each user to personalise their experience with the ability to make multiple profiles.



STAN

\$10-\$15 per month (30-day free trial)
www.stan.com.au

CRITICAL SPECS

Minimum download speed: 1.5Mbps; Maximum screen resolution: up to 4K;
Devices: Mac, PC, iOS, Android, Chromecast, Apple TV, Telstra TV, Fetch TV, PlayStation 3 and 4, Xbox One;
Titles: 1,500+; Ability to watch offline: Yes

Stan.



Foxtel Now

PREMIUM CONTENT FOR THOSE WITH CASH TO BURN.

FOXTEL NOW'S BIGGEST drawcard is its exclusive rights to HBO content, live TV and sport, plus fresh-from-the-box-office movies all without the lock-in contract that comes with a traditional Foxtel subscription — but it doesn't come cheap.

Unlike most services, which grant all-areas access, Foxtel Now content comes in different 'packs', where quality rather than quantity is the focus.

Starter Packs include Pop (which offers trending shows like *Game of Thrones* and *Westworld*) and Drama (*The Walking Dead* and *The Sopranos*), both \$15 each per month but share much of the same content, as well as Docos, Lifestyle and Kids, which cost \$10 each.

There are also two Premium Packs — Movies and Sport — which cost \$20 per month each and can only be purchased on top of at least one Starter Pack. The full package will set you back a staggering \$104 per month. You can register five devices per account, but only two can be used at once and there isn't an option to create separate user profiles.

In terms of the amount of content versus cost, you'll find better value for money elsewhere, but if you want to watch all the shows and flicks everyone's talking about (and if money is no object), Foxtel Now is the best you can get.



FOXTEL NOW

\$10-\$104 per month (two-week free trial)
www.foxtel.com.au/now

CRITICAL SPECS

Minimum download speed: 3Mbps; Maximum screen resolution: up to 1080p HD;
Devices: Mac, PC, iOS, Android, Chromecast, Apple TV, Telstra TV, PlayStation 3 and 4, Xbox One;
Titles: 2,100+; Ability to watch offline: No

foxtel now



BUYER'S GUIDE

WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING A VIDEO-ON-DEMAND SERVICE:

CONTENT

Does the streaming platform offer the movies and shows you're looking for? It may be that you need to subscribe to two or more services in order to access all the content you want.

COST

How much do you want to spend? While there are a few free, ad-supported services, most charge a monthly fee starting from around \$10.

STREAM QUALITY

Is it important for you to be able to stream content in HD or 4K? Some platforms charge more for higher quality content, and many are yet to offer 4K.

INTERNET CONNECTION

Do you have enough data and is your internet fast enough to provide the desired stream quality? Does the service offer an offline mode?

DEVICES

Do you have the right equipment to stream VoD? If you want to watch content on the big screen, you may need to invest in a third-party device like Chromecast or Apple TV.



Amazon Prime Video

THE UP-AND-COMING AMERICAN GIANT.

AMAZON PRIME VIDEO is somewhat of a hidden gem in Australia's streaming landscape. It's cheaper than most of the competition, has lots to offer and yet, like the retail giant itself, doesn't seem to have taken off Down Under... yet.

It has a great range of movies and TV shows, particularly US favourites like *The Office*, *Seinfeld* and *This Is Us*, plus a decent amount of original content, such as *The Grand Tour* and *Mozart in the Jungle*.

On the downside, there's no Chromecast support, and don't expect a lot of Aussie-produced programs — if that's your jam. Despite these shortcomings, it's well worth the price at just US\$5.99 per month.

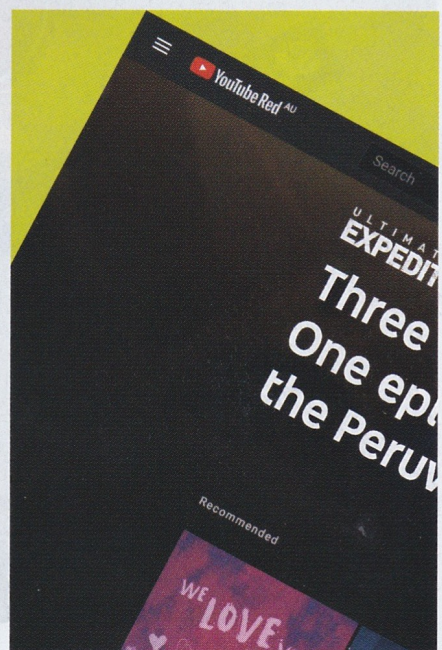


AMAZON PRIME VIDEO

US\$5.99 per month (seven-day free trial, plus US\$2.99 for the first six months)
www.primevideo.com

CRITICAL SPECS

Min download speed: 0.9Mbps; Max screen resolution: up to 4K; Devices: Mac, PC, iOS, Android, Apple TV, PlayStation 3 and 4, Xbox One; Titles: 3,100+; Ability to watch offline: Yes



YouTube Premium (formerly YouTube Red)

AN AD-FREE EXPERIENCE FOR YOUTUBE ADDICTS.

YOUTUBE PREMIUM IS not your run-of-the-mill streaming service. The video platform's subscription offering doesn't boast the kind of content you've come to expect from the likes of Netflix and Stan, but rather exists as an ad-free extension of YouTube.

With a focus on music streaming and original programming produced by its biggest stars (think PewDiePie and Rhett & Link), YouTube Premium's biggest drawbacks are its removal of advertising, ability to download videos to watch offline and listen to music without having the app open.

If you're an avid YouTuber and can't stand ads, Premium is a decent option. However, for \$14.99 per month and a measly 41 titles on offer, the service leaves a lot to be desired.



YOUTUBE PREMIUM

\$14.99 per month (one-month free trial)
www.youtube.com/red

CRITICAL SPECS

Minimum download speed: 0.5Mbps; Maximum screen resolution: up to 4K; Devices: Mac, PC, iOS, Android, Chromecast, Apple TV, Telstra TV, PlayStation 3 and 4, Xbox 360 and One, Wii U; Titles: 41; Ability to watch offline: Yes



GO ON, ADMIT IT – YOU CAN'T RESIST A LITTLE BIT OF TRASHY REALITY TV. AND LUCKILY FOR YOU, THERE'S A STREAMING SERVICE SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED FOR SATISFYING YOUR HUNGER FOR DRAMA: HAYU.

Hayu

A CHEAP AND CHEERFUL REALITY TV FIX.

GO ON, ADMIT IT — you can't resist a little bit of trashy reality TV. And luckily for you, there's a streaming service specifically designed for satisfying your hunger for over-the-top drama: Hayu.

The cheapest of the bunch at just \$5.99 per month, Hayu offers all things *Real Housewives*, *Kardashians* and *Top Chef* with a bit of true crime thrown in (*In Ice Cold Blood*).

However, with only one pricing level, there are limits. Customers can only stream video using one screen at a time and there's no option to create separate profiles for each individual user.

If reality TV is your thing, it's hard to go past Hayu's budget price tag, but if it isn't, save your money.



HAYU
\$5.99 per month (30-day free trial)
www.hayu.com

CRITICAL SPECS
Minimum download speed: 1Mbps; Maximum screen resolution: up to 1080p HD; Devices: Mac, PC, iOS, Android, Chromecast, Apple TV, Telstra TV, Fetch TV; Titles: 3,000+ episodes; Ability to watch offline: Yes



SBS ON DEMAND

www.sbs.com.au/ondemand

With a huge range of popular TV shows (including the acclaimed series *The Handmaid's Tale*) and movies from around the world, SBS On Demand is the best of the free-to-air bunch.



CRITICAL SPECS
Cost: Free (ad-supported); Minimum download speed: 1.1Mbps; Maximum screen resolution: SD; Devices: Mac, PC, iOS, Android, Chromecast, Apple TV, Telstra TV, Fetch TV; Titles: 534; Ability to watch offline: No



9NOW

www.9now.com.au

Like 7plus, Nine's VoD service offers current programs in addition to box sets of classics like *McLeod's Daughters*; however, there is less content overall.



CRITICAL SPECS
Cost: Free (ad-supported); Minimum download speed: 0.7Mbps; Maximum screen resolution: HD; Devices: Mac, PC, iOS, Android, Chromecast, Apple TV, Telstra TV, Fetch TV, PlayStation 4, Xbox One; Titles: 226; Ability to watch offline: No



ABC IVIEW

iview.abc.net.au

iView is easy to use and has some great content on offer, from news and panels (*Q&A*) to drama and comedy (*Squinters*), as well as live TV.



CRITICAL SPECS
Free (ad-supported); Minimum download speed: 1.1Mbps; Maximum screen resolution: SD; Devices: Mac, PC, iOS, Android, Chromecast, Apple TV, Telstra TV, Fetch TV, PlayStation 3 and 4, Xbox One; Titles: 166; Ability to watch offline: No



7PLUS

7plus.com.au

Channel Seven's app is a little clunky, but offers live TV and lots of shows, both current (*House Rules*) and old favourites (*The Secret Life of Us*).



CRITICAL SPECS
Cost: Free (ad-supported); Min download speed: 1.5Mbps; Max screen resolution: SD; Devices: Mac, PC, Android, iOS, Chromecast, Apple TV, Telstra TV, Fetch TV, PS4, Xbox One; Titles: 672; Ability to watch offline: No



TENPLAY

tenplay.com.au

Tenplay doesn't have the largest library, and the lack of Chromecast support is a big downside. That said, it's perfectly usable for catching up on shows like *MasterChef* and *Shark Tank*.



CRITICAL SPECS
Cost: Free (ad-supported); Minimum download speed: 1Mbps; Maximum screen resolution: SD; Devices: Mac, PC, iOS, Android, Apple TV, Telstra TV, Fetch TV, Xbox 360 and One; Titles: 115; Ability to watch offline: No