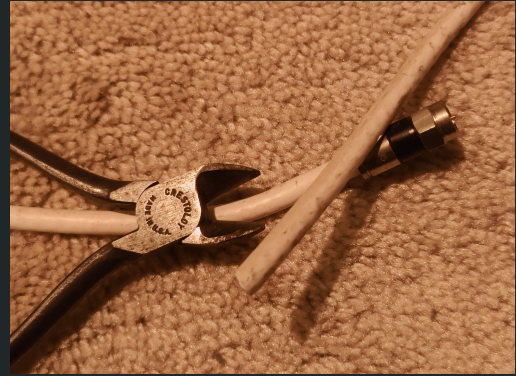


Cutting the Cord



Geof Goodrum, OPCUG+PATACS Meeting, 20 January 2024

Contacts

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Geof is a retired US Government scientist and technology enthusiast who has been active in Computer User Groups since 1984. Geof has been a user and advocate of the GNU/Linux operating system and Open Source software since 1994 with professional experience as a programmer, system administrator, network administrator, data engineer, system engineer and system architect. Geof also enjoys hiking and completed a thru hike of the 2,200 mile Appalachian Trail in 2018.

OLLI PC Users Group, <https://olligmu.org/opcug/about.html>

Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society, <https://patacs.org/index.html>

Outline

- Some Terms
- Personal Context
- Why?
- So Many Options
- Evolving Services
- My Approach
- My Current Lineup
- My Experience (so far)
- Tips
- Resources
- Group Discussion

Some Terms

- Cord Cutting 1.0: Transition from traditional fixed cable and satellite TV services to programming via broadcast antenna and Internet streaming
- Cord Cutting 2.0: Transition from wired Internet services to wireless Internet services (e.g. 5G fixed and mobile devices)
- DVR: Digital Video Recorder, cloud-based for live TV streaming services
- FAST: Free Ad Supported TV
- OTA: Over The Air broadcast TV programming (e.g. Digital TV)

Legal notice: Certain service names and trademarks that may be referenced are the property of their respective owners. Neither the presenter, PATACS nor OLLI/OPCUG endorse or promote use of any of these services.

Personal Context (1 of 2)

I live in a single person household

I watch many first-run movies in the theater

I have a 55" TCL Roku-enabled 4K smart TV and Android 13 (OnePlus 8 Pro) smartphone

My OTA reception is very poor (frequent pixelation) despite living within the I-495 Beltway

I previously subscribed to Comcast cable TV with TiVo DVR then Dish satellite TV with Hopper Sling DVR

I currently have a Comcast Xfinity 75 Mbps unlimited Internet service (\$60/month)

Personal Context (2 of 2)

Interests

- News
- Sci-fi
- Fantasy
- Supernatural horror
- Animation
- Documentaries
- Outdoor adventure
- Mysteries
- Hallmark

Not interests

- Sports
- Entertainment news
- Talk shows
- Game shows
- Cooking

My Final TV Service Bill

New TV Charges

10/18/23 - 11/17/23	Monthly TV	
	Flex Pack	62.99
	Local Channels	12.00
		<hr/>
		\$74.99
10/18/23 - 11/17/23	Equipment	
	Hopper DVR Service	15.00
		<hr/>
		\$15.00
	Surcharges	
10/18/23	FCC Regulatory Surcharge	0.11
		<hr/>
		\$0.11
	Taxes	
10/18/23	Video Communications Tax	3.30
10/18/23	State/Local Tax (Sales)	1.44
		<hr/>
		\$4.74
	New TV Charges	\$94.84

Why?

- Potential cost savings
- Unique programs
- On Demand (schedule flexibility)
- Platform availability

So Many Options

- Over the Air and Internet Streaming
- Streaming Devices
 - Roku, Amazon Fire TV, Google TV, Apple TV, PC, game consoles, mobile
 - TV built-in or add-on
- Live TV and On Demand
- Ads or No Ads

Evolving Services

- Traditional cable/satellite TV service costs continue to rise
 - Rising carriage fees charged by content providers
 - Losing subscribers
- Smaller cable companies leaving market or transitioning to Internet streaming
- Internet streaming services losing money
 - Shedding content
 - Raising fees
 - ISP access fees (vs [Net Neutrality](#))
 - Restricting password sharing
 - Including ad-supported options

My Approach

I created a [spreadsheet](#) to compare information about the services that I was most interested in, then calculated the monthly cost. Below is an excerpt of the expanded version for this presentation. See Disclaimers tab.

Service	Monthly Fee		Annual Fee		Notes
	Ads	No Ads	Ads	No Ads	
Acorn TV		\$6.99		\$69.99	On Demand British content
Amazon Prime		\$14.99		\$139.00	included with Prime membership, +\$2.99/month for no ads starting 29 January 2024.
AMC+	\$4.99	\$8.99		\$83.88	AMC, Sundance, Shudder and IFC On Demand content with six live channels
Apple TV+		\$9.99			On Demand movies and series, included with certain Apple plans
BritBox		\$8.99		\$89.99	Live and On Demand content from British providers
discovery+	\$4.99	\$8.99			On Demand content from many cable TV channels, including CNN, HGTV, History, Food Network, Trvl, etc.

QR shortcut to my streaming services spreadsheet

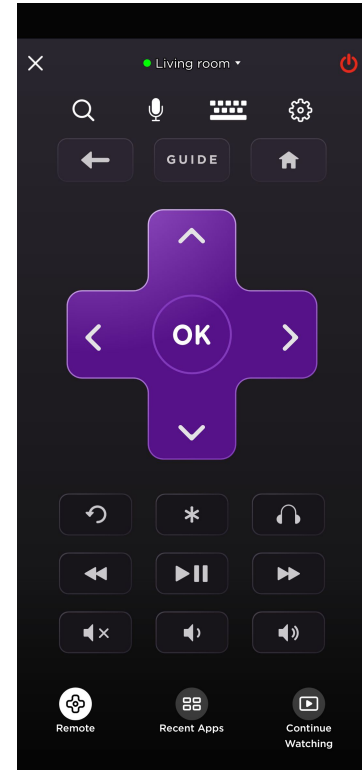


My Current Lineup

- Hulu with Disney+ Add On, Black Friday monthly discount with ads (\$2.99)
- Peacock Premium, annual with ads (\$59.99)
- Amazon Prime, annual (\$139)
- Paramount+, annual with ads (\$59.99)
- PBS Passport, annual (\$60 donation, tax deductible)
- Redbox (\$0)
- Roku Channel (\$0)
- Network and local news (\$0)

My Experience (so far)

- Must learn a different user interface for each streaming service
- Roku smartphone app (image) is more convenient than the physical remote
- Hulu is the only streaming app I've tried that won't install on my unlocked Android phone
- Watching multiple series on different services can get complicated (i.e., What was I watching and where?)
- Still transitioning from network news broadcasts to streaming news



Tips

- Set reminders before subscription renewal dates
- Review services and cancel subscriptions that you don't use often
- Save money with annual subscriptions for your favorite go-to services, monthly subscriptions for seasonal binge programming
- Most services offer initial free trials and sometimes fee discounts
- Check mobile phone plans for included streaming services
- Use the [Internet Movie Database \(IMDb\)](#) or [JustWatch](#) to find services that stream your favorite movies and TV programs
- Consider one-time On Demand rentals (e.g. Amazon Prime, Redbox) instead of a streaming service subscription

Resources

- Internet Movie Database (IMDb)
 - <https://www.imdb.com/>
- JustWatch (find streaming movies, TV shows and sports)
 - credit Leti Labell for this addition to the original presentation
 - <https://www.justwatch.com/>
- Cord Cutters News (current deals, reviews, news)
 - <https://cordcuttersnews.com/>
- CNET Best Live TV Streaming Service for Cord Cutters
 - <https://www.cnet.com/tech/services-and-software/best-live-tv-streaming-service-for-cord-cutters/>

Group Discussion

- Your experience with Cord Cutting
- Your Tips
- Favorite streaming services
- Concerns
- Questions
- Etc.



Thanks!

