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Dish Network Joins Web-TV Trend With Sling

The new service will include ESPN and offers another alternative to cable.

By  Tom Risen | Jan. 5, 2015

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The Sling TV service will allow customers to stream ESPN without a cable plan.

The growing movement of customers seeking to [end their cable television subscriptions](#) gained another option on Monday at the International Consumer Electronics Show, as Dish Network unveiled its new [Sling TV](#) Web-based video service that will feature ESPN – the sports network that is one of cable’s prized assets.

The service will launch in the first quarter of 2015 for \$20 per month and will [play video on devices](#) ranging from tablets to game consoles, Roger Lynch, CEO of Dish subsidiary Sling TV, said in a press release. Sling TV joins the growing number of services that have taken the lead from companies like Amazon and Netflix to offer programming not tied to cable or satellite television subscriptions, which charge customers for bundles of channels.

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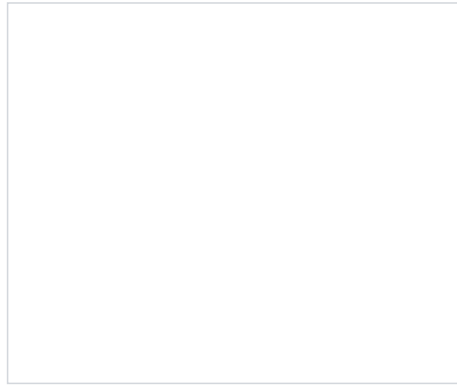
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“Consumers can now watch their favorite shows on their favorite devices that they already use to watch video. Live television, including ESPN, for \$20 per month with no commitment or contract, is a game-changer,” Lynch said. “The arrival of Sling TV lets consumers, who’ve embraced services like Netflix and Hulu, take more control of their video entertainment experience.”

The stand-alone services and cord-cutting trend may pressure cable companies like Comcast to offer simpler subscription plans, since sports networks like ESPN and premium shows on HBO are among the biggest draws for a cable package.

CBS has also launched a stand-alone video service that features the network’s current and past shows for \$5.99 per month. A new over-the-top version of HBO also will make the pay-TV network available for the first time outside of a cable or satellite subscription – perhaps in time for the [April premiere](#) of the fifth season of “Game of Thrones,” tech site Engadget reports.



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Customers may find it a better deal to pay for broadband instead of cable TV so they can access the programs they want on mobile devices. Approximately 10.6 million U.S. households [paid for broadband but not TV](#) in 2014, compared with 9.2 million in 2012, according to The New York Times, citing data from market research firm SNL Kagan.

Because of this trend, proposed mergers between Comcast and Time Warner Cable and AT&T and DirecTV have been criticized by consumer advocacy groups as a means for those companies to [expand control over Internet services](#). In their government filings, the businesses have said the mergers are necessary for them to stay relevant because of industry shifts like online video.

The Sling TV service also will offer other cable and satellite TV staples, including Cartoon Network and TNT.

This is not the first time Dish set out to disrupt the cable business model at the convention in Las Vegas: Dish's Hopper – a set-top box that can skip commercials – [was named "Best of Show" from the 2013 convention](#), though much to the chagrin of CBS. The Hopper was the subject of a lawsuit from CBS, but remains on the market.

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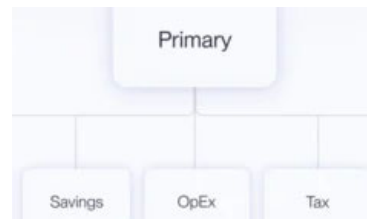
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