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TECH

Google TV: Everything You Need To Know

Jay Yarow May 21, 2010, 1:42 PM CDT

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Google's newest product is Google TV, which is a marriage of the web and traditional cable television.

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Associated Press

Google CEO Eric Schmidt calls Google TV the biggest revolution in television since color sets replaced black and white.

That's Steve Jobs-sized hyperbole! Curious to find out what the heck he's talking about?

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Google TV is a marriage of TV and the web

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Google TV takes your existing television experience and adds the internet to it. In short, you will be able to watch TV just like you do today, but you'll also be able to watch web video, surf the web, read websites -- whatever you do on the web on your big screen television. No longer will you have to crowd around the laptop to watch web video. No longer will you have to use half-way solutions like browsing through a Playstation, Wii, or Xbox.

Google TV is software based on Google's Android operating system

The same software that powers Google's mobile devices -- Android -- is being used to power Google TV. It will also have the Chrome web browser to allow you to surf the web. Google TV will also support Flash, which is good because 70% of the video on the web is powered by Flash. So you'll get a full web experience, allowing you to watch whatever web video you'd like to watch.

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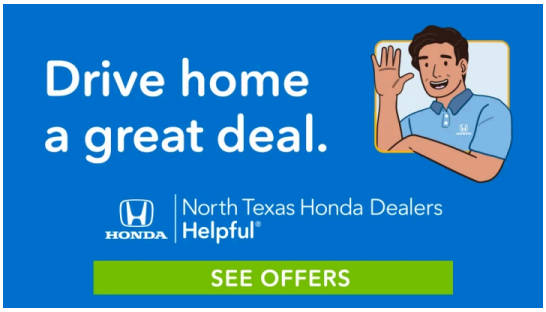

Google TV be in set top boxes and baked into televisions

Google's Android software will be built into some televisions from Sony starting in the fall of 2010. It will also be available in separate boxes from Logitech. You can plug your cable into the box from Logitech. You'll be able to watch cable and you'll get an extra layer of web functions on top of it with the Logitech box. Both have Intel chips inside them.

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Google TV will be optional to your cable interface

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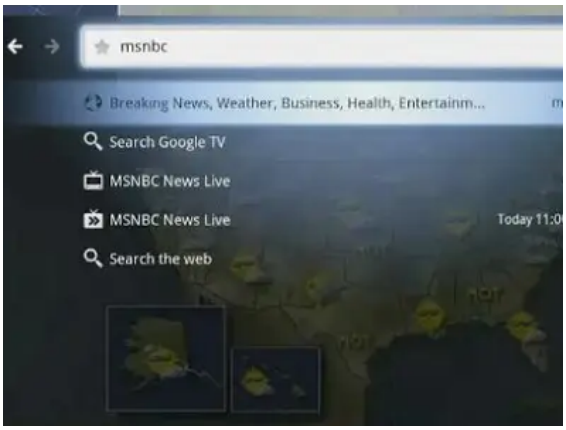

Google TV is complementary to cable. Google TV adds all the web functions on top of cable. It will suck in the local cable listings so that if you search for "30 Rock" you get to see it on Hulu (if allowed), YouTube, Netflix or NBC if its playing at the time of your search.

Google TV does not act as a DVR, though. If you want to DVR a show, you still need to use cable's interfaces. However, you'll be able to do all that from one remote control.

Dish Network is one of the big partners with Google on this launch. It will have DVR functions integrated with Google TV.

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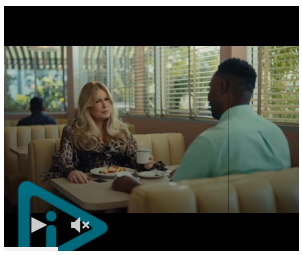

Google TV gadgets will be sold at Best Buy

Screenshot of Best Buy commercial via YouTube

Google learned its lesson from the Nexus One web store. It's going to let the professionals handle selling Google TV devices. Best Buy is the first announced retail partner. You'll be able to buy Google TV gadgets at Best Buy.

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We still don't know how much it costs

We didn't hear anything about pricing yesterday. Sony lists a 40 inch Bravia flat screen for $1,079 on its site. We'd assume a television with Google TV baked in will go for a little more since it's a nice new feature and requires stronger hardware to run.

Logitech said it wouldn't discuss pricing when we asked. For a rough point of comparison, a TiVo premiere XL box costs $499. Lower end DVRs costs $150. There is no monthly subscription fee.

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You will control Google TV with your phone or a new remote

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We spoke with Logitech about its box. It says it will include a remote that has a touch pad, a compact keyboard and typical remote elements. Let's hope it doesn't look ugly. Logitech will also have an Android app and an iPhone app to control the box.

Google will offer help for developers to make the web look good on the television

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This all sounds exciting, but how will a website designed for 20 inch monitors translate to 40 inch televisions? Google says it will give web designers and developers tools to optimize their sites for Google TV.

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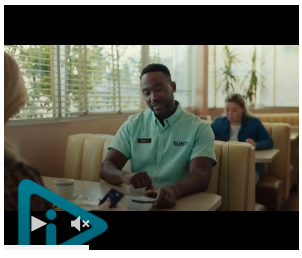

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This is just a start, developers will be able to make incredible things.

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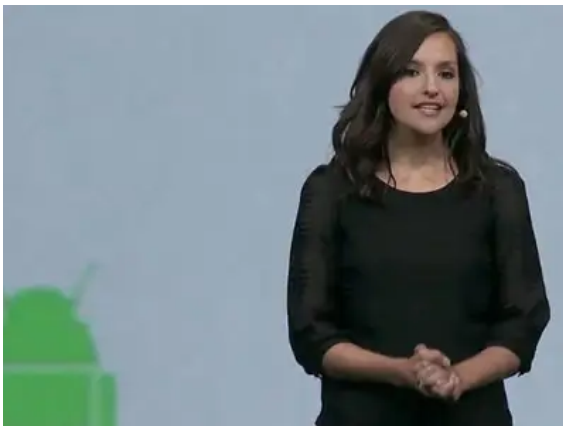

This is just the starting point for Google TV. When Apple rolled out the iPhone it was a pretty cool phone. Then it opened it up to third party developers and it became an indispensable phone. Similarly, Google is rolling out Google TV this fall. At the start of 2011, third party developers will be able to make applications for Google TV.

This gives Google TV a chance to be disruptive. Developers could build really good games for Android which could be played right on the TV without a separate console. As good as a PS3 game? Probably not. But that's the point of a disruptive technology -- it just has to be good enough.

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How will Google make money on this?

Google will make money through advertising. (It gives away the Android software.) In an interview with Fox Business, Eric Schmidt said Google would integrate advertising and share the revenue with its partners. Google will have even more information on you, so you'll get

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more targeted ads. Eric Schmidt hinted towards building interactive ads.

We're picturing some thing like this: If you watch an ad for Nike sneakers on TV, you'll be able to quickly order them on the web with Google TV.

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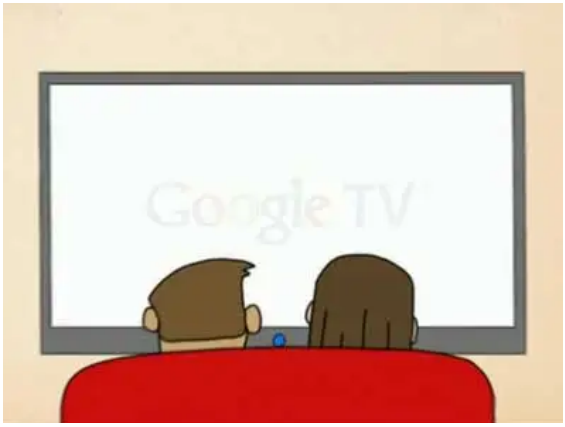
Google TV launches in fall 2010, will it be a hit?



If you're like us, you think this sounds exciting. When can we get it? In the fall of 2010. Are there more people like us that will adopt this? Maybe!

Many companies have tried this and failed. Google thinks this time is different because it is totally open. You can surf the web any which way

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It looks good on paper. We'll see if Google can execute on this promise. Google has a tendency to roll out Beta products and improve as it goes. That won't work here. My mother wants the product to work out of the box.

There's one more factor: price. If it's cheap, then maybe it will get widespread adoption. If it costs $300 to buy an extra box, we could see that as a big problem.

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Google TV is an assault on Apple, too

Click here to see how Google slapped Apple with Google TV and other new projects >

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