

Hit show 'Mad Men' will be streamed on Netflix

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In this undated file photo provided by NetFlix Inc., a representation of the Netflix one-click remote available on many consumer electronics devices this spring, is shown. Netflix, Inc., the world's leading Internet subscription service for enjoying movies and TV shows, and Lionsgate , a leading global entertainment company, Tuesday, April, 5, 2011, announced a multiyear syndication deal in which Lionsgate has licensed the first four seasons of its Emmy Award-winning series "Mad Men" to be watched instantly by Netflix members starting July 27, with additional seasons being added annually after they complete airing on their respective seasons on the AMC network. (AP Photo/NetFlix Inc., file) NO SALES

(AP) -- Netflix will start streaming the hit TV series "Mad Men" in a multi-year deal the online movie rental company struck with Lions Gate, the show's producer.

Netflix Inc. and Lions Gate Entertainment Corp. said late Tuesday the show's first four seasons will be available beginning July 27, with additional seasons added each year after they air on AMC.

[Netflix](#) is already streaming the first four seasons of "Mad Men" in Canada. Set in the 1960s, the drama series stars Jon Hamm as an advertising executive working in Manhattan. The fifth season will return in early 2012.

The deal comes as traditional TV services are increasingly viewing Netflix as a competitor rather than a customer. CBS Corp.'s Showtime recently pulled back shows such as "Dexter" from Netflix's [streaming service](#). Netflix, meanwhile, is also stepping up the rivalry with the planned debut of an original series, "House of Cards" with actor Kevin Spacey.

Netflix had 20.2 million subscribers by the end of 2010. That compares with an estimated 28 million customers for Time Warner Inc.'s HBO. [Liberty Media Corp.](#)'s Starz, which ended the year with 18.2 million subscribers, said in late March it will start imposing a 90-day delay on streaming new episodes of original series on Netflix. Previously, [Netflix](#) customers were able to stream new episodes of the Starz original series "Spartacus" immediately after they aired. Showtime, meanwhile, had less than 20 million subscribers.

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