

Microsoft brings TV content to the Xbox

October 5 2011, By BARBARA ORTUTAY , AP Technology Writer

(AP) -- Owners of the Xbox 360 will soon be able to watch a broad breadth of TV shows and other content through their gaming consoles - though most of that won't be free.

Microsoft Corp. said Wednesday that it's partnering with [Comcast Corp](#)., HBO, Bravo, Verizon's FiOS service and others to bring on-demand and live television content to the Xbox.

This doesn't exactly replace the set-top boxes currently used to access TV programming. But M2 Research analyst Billy Pidgeon says it's likely a good option for families who want to be able to access TV content in different rooms of the house. With the Xbox, they won't need a second set-top box.

What they will still need is a subscription to Comcast or other pay-TV services. The Xbox may make it easier to access those HBO shows, but you'll still have to pay for them. In some cases, you'll also need a subscription to the Xbox Live Gold online service, which costs \$60 a year.

Besides on-demand shows and movies, some live TV channels will be available. For example, Verizon said it will bring a selection of popular live TV channels to the Xbox. The key word here, Pidgeon points out, is "some." Verizon subscribers will still need a set-top box to access all channels and digital video recording services, he said.

The deal helps Microsoft position the Xbox 360 as more than a gaming

console. The Xbox, along with [Sony Corp.](#)'s [PlayStation 3](#) and the [Nintendo Wii](#), already stream Netflix. Sony has also worked to position the PlayStation 3 as an entertainment hub for games, music and movies.

"We continue to invest and focus on games. It's a key pillar of our offering," said Ross Honey, general manager of content acquisition at Microsoft. The latest TV offerings, he added, "bring another pillar" to the Xbox experience.

Microsoft has sold 55 million [Xbox 360 consoles](#) worldwide since they were introduced in 2005. There are 35 million [Xbox Live](#) members. The company said the new entertainment content will be available this holiday season in more than 20 countries, but did not give an exact timing.

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