

Verizon-Redbox deal adds to online video choices

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In this Jan. 6, 2012 photo, attendees check out the unveiling of 4G devices at the Verizon booth during the Consumer Electronics Show, in Las Vegas.

Challenging Netflix, Verizon said Monday, Feb. 6, 2012, it will start a video streaming service later this year in cooperation with Redbox and its DVD rental kiosks. (AP Photo/Isaac Brekken)

(AP) -- A new Internet streaming venture built around Redbox's DVD-rental kiosks adds to a crowded field of online video-viewing services dominated by Netflix.

In announcing the new venture Monday, [Verizon Communications](#) Inc. and Redbox's parent company, Coinstar Inc., did not say what types of content will be available or how much the service will cost when it starts in the second half of this year.

But executives did say the service will bundle streaming and DVDs,

which [Redbox](#) currently rents through its ubiquitous red kiosks in supermarkets, drug stores and other places around the U.S.

It's likely that any plan from the new, still-unnamed venture will be cheaper than the minimum \$16 a month that [Netflix](#) customers now pay to get both DVDs and online streaming access to a vast trove of movies, TV show episodes and original programming. It's also likely that the new venture won't have as extensive a selection as Netflix now does.

Companies such as Apple Inc. and Amazon.com Inc., as well as [cable companies](#) and TV stations themselves, already offer a variety of ways to catch TV show episodes and movies using Internet-connected devices.

Here are details on some of them:

- Amazon's Instant Video

Amazon's service offers thousands of movies and TV show episodes for online rental. Rental prices are generally \$1 to \$5. There is no monthly [subscription plan](#), so this option is best if you're looking for an a la carte plan that lets you pick what you want to watch.

Amazon offers free streaming of some of its content to members of its \$79-per-year Prime program, which also offers free two-day shipping and discounts on next-day shipping.

With Amazon, you can stream movies and shows on computers or on [TV sets](#) using a compatible, Internet-connected device such as a Blu-ray player or a set-top box from the likes of Sony, Panasonic, TiVo or Logitech.

- Apple [iTunes](#)

Renting movies through Apple's iTunes is another pay-per-view option to access the latest movies or TV shows. You can rent regular or high-definition flicks and watch them on an iPhone, iPad, computer or TV set using an Apple TV set-top box.

Apple lets you rent first-run, high-definition movies the day they come out on DVD for \$5 each, though most movies cost \$3 or \$4. TV shows are generally \$1. You can watch rentals for a day or two from when you start playing them.

As with Amazon, renting movies through Apple is a good option if you want the latest releases as soon as possible.

- Blockbuster

The on-demand service from this movie rental pioneer lets customers rent or buy movies and TV shows and watch them through their TV, Blu-ray player, digital video recorder, mobile phone or other gadget. There are no monthly fees.

Renting ranges from free for a small amount of content to "\$2.99 or less" and "\$3 or higher" depending on the movie or show.

Separately, Blockbuster also offers access to its (at)Home service for customers who sign up for satellite-TV services from Dish Network Corp., its parent company. The (at)Home service includes streaming movies as well as DVDs by mail. It is included for three months for new Dish customers who sign up for the service. After that, it's as low as \$10 a month.

- Cable

Cable TV providers such as Comcast Corp. and Time Warner Cable Inc.

offer on-demand options to their monthly subscribers. Time Warner charges \$3 or less for older movies, more for new releases. Other cable TV companies have similar pricing. Movies are sometimes free, including those that come with a subscription to HBO or other premium channels.

Of course, you need monthly cable service, which generally runs about \$70 per month.

- Hulu and Hulu Plus

The service owned by the parent companies of broadcasting networks ABC, NBC and Fox offers thousands of TV show episodes and movies to its viewers.

Besides a free option, Hulu Plus subscribers can pay \$8 per month for more content, high-definition viewing and access on the iPad and newer-model iPhones, as well as video game consoles and high-end TV sets from Samsung, Sony or others.

Hulu's content skews more toward TV shows than movies, though both are available. It's a good option for those looking to watch shows such as the "Daily Show," "Family Guy" or "The Office."

Both Hulu and Hulu Plus show advertisements, though on Hulu Plus there are movies available without commercial interruption. Hulu is also delaying the availability of some TV episodes on its free service.

- Vudu, from Wal-Mart

Walmart.com offers streaming movies and TV shows through the website Vudu.com, generally for \$2 to \$6. Many [movies](#) are available for streaming a la carte, the same day they come out on DVD. There are no

monthly subscription plans.

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