

Yap.TV tunes Internet Age viewing for the world

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Photo illustration shows a customer testing an iPad at an Apple store in France. San Francisco startup Yap.TV went international with a hit service that helps people mine gems from junk in the growing mountain of shows, films and videos.

San Francisco startup Yap.TV went international with a hit service that helps people mine gems from junk in the growing mountain of shows, films and videos.

Versions of Yap.[TV software](#) released in the United States early last year for [Apple iPad](#), [iPhone](#), and [iPod touch](#) devices have been customized for 19 more countries and in four languages other than English.

Applications for smartphones or tablets powered by Android software were in the works and expected to be ready in a matter of months.

Yap.TV lets show watchers engage in real time on Twitter, Facebook or the firm's own social network, essentially tapping into friends or others with similar interests to find programs or films likely to please.

Yap.TV blended input from friends and show fans with programming data to enable users to not only have conversations around shows they like but to be directed to new options by viewers with similar interests.

"It starts with discovery, which is why a guide became such a big part of this," Yap.TV co-founder Shawn Patrick told AFP.

"No one has ever created a worldwide social television guide," he continued. "We are the new front-end to TV."

Yap.TV mated the television program guide with the Twitter stream, [Facebook](#) and other social networks to let people see what shows people are talking about and join in the conversation along with the viewing.

Yap.TV backers include Javelin Venture Partners and Blumberg Capital, and Apple co-founder [Steve Wozniak](#) is an advisor to the startup.

Patrick, 44, spoke of being enthralled by the Kwai Chang Caine character in the US television series "Kung Fu" as a young boy and imagining as a child that he would grow up to become "Batman".

"[Media content](#) is escapism; these stories are powerful talismans," Patrick said. "We bring people together around the content they love."

"We want people to get shows they want without having to dumbly navigate through 900 channels," he continued. "It is a nightmare menu with no way to know what is garbage without insight -- that is where social media comes in."

More than 600,000 people have taken to using Yap.TV since it launched early last year and the website has gotten visits from every country except two in Africa.

"Nearly everybody on this rock invests time in consumer television content," Patrick said. "This creates a better way."

The list of countries where free Yap.TV applications are available includes Brazil, Britain, Canada, France, Germany and Italy.

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