

Sling Media unveils two devices for out-of-home TV

July 16 2014, by Anick Jesdanun



This product image provided by Sling Media shows SlingTV. The new SlingTV is identical to the Slingbox 500 currently on the market, but with new software to recommend things to watch. On the living-room TV, you can see scores and stats for games currently on TV, along with a guide to what's exciting at the moment, such as a team making a comeback. The new software will also give you more information on movies and TV shows. (AP Photo/Sling Media)

Sling Media, the maker of devices that let people watch their cable channels while traveling, is trying to become more relevant in the living room.

Traditionally, Sling's strength has been in so-called place shifting. Attached to the home cable box, the Slingbox device sends video to various phones, tablets and other devices. If you're on a work trip out-of-town, you can still catch the local news in your city live on a SlingPlayer app. You can also use that to watch shows on your home video recorder.

Inside the home, though, the Slingbox hasn't been of much use beyond letting you watch from a phone or tablet in another room.

Sling is trying to change that with a model announced Tuesday. The new SlingTV is identical to the Slingbox 500 currently on the market, but with new software to recommend things to watch. On the living-room TV, you can see scores and stats for games currently on TV, along with a guide to what's exciting at the moment, such as a team making a comeback. The new software will also give you more information on movies and TV shows.

The new feature incorporates some of what's already found on TiVo recorders and cable set-top boxes. Because the box still can't record shows, the Slingbox's biggest appeal will likely remain in remote viewing—both when traveling and on devices in other rooms.

Although more people have been watching television on their computers and mobile devices, doing that with live TV has been difficult. Services such as Hulu offer shows on a delayed basis, while apps from cable providers and TV channels often have a maze of restrictions.

The Slingbox tries to take the hassle out of remote live viewing. For the most part, as long as something can be viewed on the home TV, it can be viewed on the app. Each Slingbox is attached to a personal account and password to allay piracy concerns.

Even so, Sling will have a tough time broadening its reach.

It works only with television channels you have at home, so it will exclude those who have dropped cable service and want more than what the antenna provides. At best, it's for college students who wish to remotely watch what's on their parents' TV.

In addition, Slingbox has been popular for sports fans wanting to keep up with their teams while traveling. Sling wants to broaden its appeal to those who keep up with fictional television shows and reality-style competitions, but fewer people are watching those live.

Like the model it replaces, the SlingTV will retail for about \$300. Apps for phones and tablets will cost \$15 each. Remote viewing is free on personal computers. Existing Slingbox 500 users will get the features through free software upgrades when the SlingTV comes out in late August.

Meanwhile, Sling is making a cheaper, entry-level model for \$150, starting July 20. Called Slingbox M1, this model lacks the new living-room guides and focuses on the remote viewing that Slingboxes have been known for.

Sling Media is based in Foster City, California, and is owned by EchoStar Corp. of Englewood, Colorado.

© 2014 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

Citation: Sling Media unveils two devices for out-of-home TV (2014, July 16) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-07-media-unveils-devices-out-of-home-tv.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.