

Ahead of Emmys, Netflix already winning online

August 23 2014, by Sara Puig



(From L) Netflix chief content officer Ted Sarandos, actress Robin Wright, executive producer/actor Kevin Spacey and Netflix Vice president for original series Cindy Holland, pictured in Los Angeles, California, on February 13, 2014

Even if it doesn't take home any of the major trophies at Monday's Emmy Awards, Netflix will have already proven itself the top winner in one regard: Internet programming.

It's a position that Microsoft, Amazon and Hulu would all like to hold.

But with [series](#) such as "House of Cards" and "Orange is The New Black" up for major awards and millions of Internet users at its backing, Netflix seems unlikely to budge anytime soon.

Already this year the California-based company, founded in 2007, reported that its subscribers topped 50 million in more than 40 countries.

And in a July [earnings report](#), the streaming titan said its profit had jumped to \$71 million compared to \$29.5 million in the same quarter a year before.

Jon Taplin, professor of Digital Entertainment Media at the University of Southern California, said Netflix's power "comes from its subscriber base. They pay almost \$10 a month."

"That's a gigantic amount of cash flow, which then is spent on programming, on buying content and making new content," he said.

Netflix's original programming includes "Orange is The New Black," a wildly-popular women's prison "dramedy," nominated for best comedy and which also earned nominations for five cast members.

Political drama "House of Cards," meanwhile, is up for best drama and earned actor nominations for star Kevin Spacey, as a scheming congressman, and co-star Robin Wright, as his wife.

The show had aimed to become the first online-only series to win in major categories at last year's Emmys, but only took home a prize for best directing for David Fincher.



Actress Laverne Cox attends Netflix's 'Orange is the New Black' panel discussion, at Directors Guild Of America in Los Angeles, California, on August 4, 2014

In addition to its original programming, Netflix offers major movies and TV series, which it streams in agreement with US entertainment studios.

That means subscribers can watch the likes of "Breaking Bad," "How I Met Your Mother," and "Law & Order," on the platform as well.

'Doing it differently'

Netflix's success is in large part due to its format, which caters to the lifestyles and habits of consumers—many of them younger—who demand more flexibility and who use devices such as tablets and smartphones.

Instead of posting its original shows in weekly installments like television does, Netflix releases entire seasons all at once.

It's a strategy online retail giant Amazon has attempted to imitate with its original series "Alpha House," about US senators who room together in the nation's capital, and "Betas," a show about app developers searching for an investor.

"Amazon's beginnings in this space were very problematic. Now they've reconsidered doing it differently, and they hired somebody who's made TV before," said Taplin.

The online retailer is now working on six new original-programming projects, including one starring Mexican actor Gael Garcia Bernal.

But it's Hulu that has established itself as the most serious competitor thus far, after a large publicity campaign.



(From L) Michael Strahan, Jessica Seinfeld, Jerry Seinfeld, Mark Consuelos and Kelly Ripa attend Amazon Studios Premiere Screening for 'Alpha House', in New York, on November 11, 2013

Its original series about Latino adolescents, "East Los High," opened a door for the streaming service to the vast Latino market in the United States.

Microsoft, for its part, is planning its own original programming to be distributed through its Xbox One console.

A series spun from blockbuster science-fiction battle franchise "Halo" will be produced by director Steven Spielberg.

"Games have been part of our DNA for at least the last 15 years, and creating original TV content is a logical next step in our evolution," executive vice president of Xbox Entertainment Studios Jordan Levin said in a release.

Yahoo, which only recently dipped its toe into the water, is aiming to produce four series in a format closer to YouTube, with shorter content.

"I don't think Yahoo is a competitor at all," Taplin said.

But, he added, "in five years there will be fewer (television) channels, but much of the dramatic programming will be delivered on demand."

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Citation: Ahead of Emmys, Netflix already winning online (2014, August 23) retrieved 27 April

2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-08-emmys-netflix-online.html>

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