

Netflix streaming service heading for Japan

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Netflix on Wednesday said that it will expand its online streaming television and movie service to Japan late this year.

Netflix is ramping up efforts to conquer the world, even as competition is heating up in the growing market for Internet television.

The California-based company laid out a vision last month to be in 200 markets in the next two years, up from the current 50 as it accelerates its global expansion.

The rollout in Japan, which was estimated to have about 36 million households with broadband Internet connections, will follow expansion of Netflix service into Australia and New Zealand next month, according to the company.

"With its rich culture and celebrated creative traditions, Japan is a critical component of our plan to connect people around the world to stories they love," Netflix chief executive Reed Hastings said in a release.

Netflix promised a strong selection of Japanese television shows and films at launch, along with [original content](#) such as "Marco Polo," Marvel's "Daredevil" and acclaimed documentary "Virunga."

Netflix planned to open a regional office in Tokyo to foster alliances with consumer electronics makers as well as creators of films and television shows.

"People in Japan soon will have access to great entertainment from all over the world for a low monthly price, while our more than 57 million members will benefit from increased access to great Japanese films and TV shows," said Gregory Peters, newly-promoted head of Netflix Japan.

Netflix subscribers can stream video content using smart TVs, tablet computers, smartphones, computers, and Internet-linked game consoles and set-top boxes.

Details on pricing and availability in Japan will be disclosed later in the year, Netflix said.

The expansion comes amid an increasing shift to Internet-based on-demand television, with offerings from rivals such as Amazon, Time Warner's HBO and CBS, among others.

Netflix announced in January that it boosted membership to more than 57 million users at the end of 2014, a gain of 13 million. Profits jumped to \$266 million for the year on \$5.5 billion in revenue.

Competition is growing meanwhile not merely in terms of service but original content for Netflix, which gained accolades for the "House of Cards" series and made a global splash with "Marco Polo."

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