

NBCUniversal launching online comedy service for \$4 a month

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NBCUniversal's latest effort to target millennials is coming: An online video service focused on comedy that costs \$4 a month.

The service, Seeso, will have original content and NBC shows like "30 Rock" and "The Office," "Saturday Night Live," standup and the "Monty Python" movies. It will be available for most people in January.

NBCUniversal and its owner, cable and Internet giant Comcast, have been trying different ways to get young people's attention as live TV viewing declines. If Seeso had been born 15 years ago, it would have launched as a cable channel, said Evan Shapiro, Executive Vice President of NBCUniversal Digital Enterprises. But online viewing today is "clearly part of the mainstream," and to reach comedy nerds, Comcast is launching Seeso as an online subscription service.

Comcast has also launched a YouTube-like video service, Watchable; is trying out an Internet-based basic cable TV alternative that doesn't require a cable box in some markets; and invested in new media outlets like BuzzFeed and Vox.

But Seeso will have to compete for attention in a crowded market.

"In the past year we keep seeing more and more services coming up, more niche services," said Glenn Hower, an analyst with market research firm Parks Associates.

There's Netflix, which has been streaming video for years and has a library with diverse choices, and newer competitors like HBO's online channel and Dish Network's Sling, which shows live TV. There are also specialty services such as anime-focused Crunchyroll.

Seeso won't have ads and viewers can watch about 10 to 15 percent of the available content for free.

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