

Apple teams with Steven Spielberg on video expansion

October 11 2017, by Michael Liedtke

Apple is teaming up with award-winning director Steven Spielberg for its first major push into TV programming.

The iPhone maker is bringing back Spielberg's 30-year-old anthology series "Amazing Stories" in its attempt to build an online [video subscription service](#) to challenge the digital networks operated by Netflix, Amazon, Hulu and HBO.

"We love being at the forefront of Apple's investment in scripted programming, and can't think of a better property than Spielberg's beloved 'Amazing Stories' franchise," NBC Entertainment President Jennifer Salke said in a statement Tuesday. NBC Entertainment works with Spielberg's Amblin Television on the series.

Apple declined to comment on the deal. The Wall Street Journal first reported Apple had secured the "Amazing Stories" rights.

The series aired on NBC from 1985 to 1987 and won five Emmy awards for its mixture of science fiction and horror episodes, although the series was never a big hit in the ratings.

It marked a return to TV for Spielberg, who first made a name for himself directing the ABC film, "Duel" in 1971 before moving on to the movie theaters. His films include box-office blockbusters such as "Jaws," "E.T.," "Jurassic Park," the "Indiana Jones" franchise and critically acclaimed pictures such as "Saving Private Ryan," "Lincoln"

and "Schindler's List," for which he won an Academy Award for best director.

Apple is planning to spend about \$1 billion on original programming during the next year in an effort to bring in more revenue to its rapidly growing services division. The Cupertino, California, company already offers two video series through its Apple Music streaming service, "Planet of the Apps" and "Carpool Karaoke," but neither has created much buzz.

Even though it appears to be more serious about TV programming, Apple still isn't sending anywhere near Netflix, which is pouring \$6 billion into its line-up this year as it tries to expand its current worldwide audience of more than 100 million subscribers. And Netflix is increasing the prices for its two most popular plans by a \$1 to \$2 per month in an effort to raise more money to spend on future programming.

Apple is expected to spend more than \$50 million on 10 episodes of "Amazing Stories." While the future plans for the [series](#) revival haven't been revealed, the original "Amazing Stories" run attracted guest appearances from a list of stars that included Kevin Costner, Harvey Keitel, Charlie Sheen, Mark Hamill and John Lithgow, while its list of episode directors and writers included Spielberg, Martin Scorsese, Clint Eastwood, Robert Zemeckis and Brad Bird.

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Citation: Apple teams with Steven Spielberg on video expansion (2017, October 11) retrieved 21 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2017-10-apple-teams-steven-spielberg-video.html>

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