

DirecTV, TBS, TNT to put shows online

August 27 2009, By DEBORAH YAO , AP Business Writer

(AP) -- DirecTV Group Inc. is in talks with the TBS and TNT cable networks to offer their shows online, according to two people familiar with the discussions.

If a deal is reached, DirecTV subscribers would be able to watch shows from those [cable networks](#) on the Internet, the people said on condition of anonymity because the talks still are ongoing. DirecTV, the nation's largest satellite [TV operator](#), previously said it was considering such deals but did not specify the networks.

DirecTV joins a growing list of cable, satellite and phone companies that are offering consumers a "multiscreen" experience: the ability to watch shows on TV, computers and mobile devices like cell phones.

As online video grows in popularity, pay-TV operators and cable networks are under pressure to offer a service that consumers want while still protecting lucrative subscription fees that operators are paying to the networks. The two sides are expected to share in any advertising revenue generated from online videos.

On Thursday, [Time Warner Cable](#) Inc. said it has deals with at least 12 cable networks that would allow the cable operator to put their content on the Internet.

The 12 are: Time Warner Inc.'s TBS, TNT and HBO; CBS Corp.'s CBS network; Syfy from [General Electric](#) Co.'s NBC Universal; BBC America, [Cablevision Systems](#) Corp.'s AMC, WE tv, IFC, Sundance,

Discovery Communications LLC's Discovery and the Smithsonian Channel, a joint venture between CBS's Showtime Networks Inc. and the Smithsonian Institution.

Time Warner Cable will begin testing the service in 5,000 households nationally over the next few months. Subscribers will be able to access many shows on the cable networks' Web sites or on Time Warner Cable's sites.

[Verizon Communications](#) Inc., which offers television through its ultra-high-speed FiOS service, also unveiled its own online video trial Thursday. It currently has deals with TNT and TBS, but expects to add other networks soon. The phone company started its trial last week with 500 households and plans to expand.

Verizon will allow up to nine people in a household to sign up, and five can watch shows at the same time, spokeswoman Heather Wilner said.

Wilner said that Verizon also plans eventually to bring cable content to mobile devices, noting that it already offers shows through Verizon Wireless' VCast.

She said Verizon began online access to movies from Liberty Media Corp.'s Starz movies; Walt Disney Co.'s ESPN360 and Disney Connection; YES Network and NFL Game Extra as early as 2005, some for a fee.

Comcast Corp. and Time Warner Inc., announced in June that they are collaborating on a set of protocols for online access to cable shows. Comcast, the nation's largest cable TV operator, has signed up 24 cable and broadcast networks to participate in its online video trial of 5,000 householders, including Time Warner Inc.'s HBO and Cinemax, as well as Starz and CBS.

The concept is dubbed "TV Everywhere" by New York-based Time Warner Inc. and branded "On Demand Online" by Philadelphia-based Comcast. DirecTV, based in El Segundo, Calif., did not disclose the name of its online video service.

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