

Roku buys library of the short-lived streaming service Quibi

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This Aug. 13, 2020 file photo shows a logo for Roku on a remote control in Portland, Ore. On Friday, Jan. 8, 2021, Roku is buying short-lived streaming service Quibi's content library to bolster content for its free Roku Channel. Financial terms were undisclosed. AP Photo/Jenny Kane, File)

Roku is buying the content library of Quibi, the short-lived streaming

service, to bulk up its own free ad-supported channel.

Quibi, short for quick bites, raised \$1.75 billion from investors including major Hollywood players like Disney, NBCUniversal and Viacom. It produced shows that were released in 10- to 12-minute increments or less, believing that there was strong demand from people stuck doing anything from waiting in lines to commuting.

But it stepped into a market already saturated with short videos from YouTube, TikTok and other platforms, and that content is essentially generated free of cost.

Quibi also launched in April 2020, when a global pandemic scrambled the routines of millions, including commutes to work. It shut down last month.

Roku created its business solely as a hub for other [streaming services](#), but has recently begun piling up content for its free Roku Channel.

With the acquisition, Roku will acquire 75 staccato-style programming with some very big names attached. Idris Elba, Kevin Hart, Liam Hemsworth, Anna Kendrick, Nicole Richie, Chrissy Teigen and Lena Waithe have all been in Quibi shows. That includes more than 12 shows that never aired on Quibi before it was shuttered. The shows target the 18-35 demographic, an attractive segment for advertisers.

Roku spokesperson Dallas Lawrence said the short format will work well for the ad-supported Roku Channel because there are "natural commercial breaks built into the programming."

The Quibi content, created for mobile viewing, can still be viewed on phones via Roku's [mobile app](#).

Roku says its [channel](#) reached 61.8 million people in the fourth quarter, double that from the prior year. More people are streaming entertainment as people stay at home during the pandemic, but there's growing competition, too. New streaming services including Discovery+, NBCUniversal's Peacock, HBOMax, and others have been launched to rival older services like Netflix and Hulu.

The Roku Channel includes more than 40,000 free movies and shows and 150 free live linear television channels.

Financial terms were undisclosed Friday.

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