

Bezos is stepping down. But Hollywood isn't expecting big studio changes yet

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Amazon.com founder Jeff Bezos, who is stepping down as chief executive, has established himself as a Hollywood mogul, launching a studio, showing up at the Oscars and buying an estate previously owned by David Geffen.

But industry insiders and analysts don't expect Amazon's succession plan to have a major impact on the company's show business plans—at least not right away.

Bezos, 57, is known to have an affinity for the entertainment business.

Under his watch, Prime Video became a worthy competitor to Netflix, Amazon Studios bought prestigious films such as "Manchester by the Sea" and the company paid \$250 million for the rights to make a series based on "The Lord of the Rings."

So will the e-commerce giant's interest in entertainment wane with Bezos' move?

Don't count on it, people familiar with the company said Tuesday.

"I don't believe it will change things at the [studio](#) level," said one former Amazon executive who requested anonymity to speak about an ex-employer. "True, Bezos likes the studio business, but I think this move is largely freeing him from daily running the entire retail operation. The teams below will continue the entertainment business at the same level."

Bezos doesn't leave his post until the third quarter of this year, and besides, he won't really be retiring when he does. Instead, he will become executive chairman. That's the same title Disney's Bob Iger took when he stepped down as CEO in February 2020. Iger continues to play a high-profile role at Disney, overseeing creative efforts while new CEO Bob Chapek handles operations.

As executive chair, Bezos said, he will "stay engaged in important Amazon initiatives," but also work on Day 1 Fund, the Bezos Earth Fund, Blue Origin, the Washington Post and his other passions. Andy Jassy, CEO of Amazon Web Services, will become Amazon's CEO after

Bezos transitions out.

"Those of us who know Andy are excited to see him take on this greater responsibility," said Brian Olsavsky, Amazon's chief financial officer in an earnings call with investors Tuesday. "He's a visionary leader, a great operator. He understands what makes Amazon such a special, innovative company."

An Amazon Studios spokeswoman did not immediately return a request for comment on whether Bezos' transition will affect the studio.

Amazon Studios, based in Culver City, is run by Jen Salke, a former NBC executive who took the job in 2018 after the departure of Roy Price. She reports to Prime Video head Mike Hopkins, the former Sony television executive named to the post in February.

Peter Csathy, founder of digital media consultancy Creatv Media, said he doesn't expect much to change, calling the studio business "fairly autonomous."

"The overall direction has been set, smoothly sailing on a subscription platform sea that no one can touch," he said in an email.

Prime Video acts as a sweetener for Amazon Prime customers, who pay \$12.99 a month or \$120 a year, for free delivery on a massive number of retail items. Amazon also sells its video streaming service on its own for \$8.99 a month.

The company is continuing to invest in original content. The sequel to Borat, "Borat Subsequent Moviefilm," drew tens of millions of streams in its opening weekend.

Eunice Shin, a partner at Prophet, a brand and marketing consultancy,

agreed that Amazon will probably stick with the plan for Prime Video and Amazon Studios.

"The hiring of Mike Hopkins last year, the recent content deals, the Amazon Fire deals with other streaming services—all have been strong signals that Amazon is very committed to its entertainment business," Shin said.

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