

Sports not your thing? Streaming options from Philo might be for you

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Sure, the Super Bowl, March Madness and the World Series all are national obsessions, but not everyone craves TV sports.

In the spirit of reaching those consumers, Philo has a unique cutting-the-cord proposition. Ditch cable but still get your favorite cable networks—like AMC, MTV, Discovery and Nickelodeon—for just \$20 monthly.

It's the most economical deal among the cable TV streaming alternatives, by far, and it's the absence of sports that lets Philo come up with the price point.

"TV has gotten more expensive," says Andrew McCollum, the CEO of Philo. "The lion's share of those costs and price increases go to paying the sports and broadcast networks."

So Philo has a deal for you: no broadcast TV channels, like YouTube TV, Hulu with Live TV and AT&T Now have, no sports, and no news either. But if you want your MTV, Philo is one of the few streaming places for you.

The prices for the cable streaming alternative service have gone way up in the past year, as AT&T Now went from \$35 to \$65, YouTube TV from \$35 to \$50 and Sling TV from \$25 to \$30.

McCollum attributes it to higher sports fees. The cost to the consumer of just ESPN alone, he says, is \$15 monthly. "So if you're not into sports, you're paying \$180 for a channel you never watch." Philo doesn't have the news channels because the same companies that own the news networks (AT&T, Comcast, Fox) also own sports channels and won't let Philo buy one without the other, McCollum says. "That would drive up the costs."

Cord Cutters News recently noted that for folks looking to replace cable entirely, the combo of YouTube and Philo "could be the perfect replacement."

Philo has many of the channels not carried by YouTube TV or Hulu with Live TV—like MTV, Nickelodeon, BET and Comedy Central.

The combo would be a \$70 package, which could price out many consumers who are voting with their pocketbooks and wallets and ditching some of the streamers, in the spirit of streaming overload.

Consumers are cutting back and switching. Dish Network just announced a loss of 194,000 subscribers to Sling TV, while some 1.2 million subscribers said goodbye to AT&T Now. Meanwhile, the latest new streaming entry, Disney+, recently said it had grown to 28.6 million subscribers since launching in December.

The Streaming Wars, set to continue in April and May with two new subscription services, NBC's Peacock and AT&T's HBO Max, "is a huge boon for us," McCollum says.

Consumers use streaming devices like the Roku and Amazon Fire TV Stick to access the new

services, "and that's where we are too," so he hopes new viewers find him there as well.

So how is Philo doing?

McMollum won't reveal subscriber numbers but says the service grew 300% last year, "and we're happy." But he admits it's "tough to be a startup in this space," battling giants like Disney, Google, Dish and AT&T.

Going forward, McCollum is looking into adding premium networks as an add-on option for Philo subscribers, and movie genre packs.

The company is named after Philo T. Farnsworth, an early inventor of television, who worked on the new medium in San Francisco, directly across the street from Philo's offices on Green Street.

"He's an inspiration to us all," says McCollum.

As a side note, McCollum is often credited as one of the five co-founders of Facebook, a Harvard classmate of Mark Zuckerberg—although you won't see his name on the official Facebook corporate history. That lists Zuckerberg, Dustin Moskovitz, Chris Hughes and Eduardo Saverin.

McCollum, however, does credit himself as a co-founder on his LinkedIn and Philo bio.

He left Facebook soon after it started to finish school. "I did Facebook as a once-in-a-lifetime experience and it was amazing to be part of that, but then on the flip side, I also viewed finishing school as an important experience that I wanted to have," McMollum has said. "I knew if I didn't leave when I did, it was not going to happen."

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