All the things Apple didn’t tell us about its streaming TV service

Apple announced its Apple TV Plus streaming service today, along with a handful of original TV shows that are in the works — but it left out just about every key detail beyond their names. That includes price, a release date, or a real sense of the company’s strategy, leaving open a lot of questions about how Apple plans to break into the booming streaming space.

Today’s event provided a big marketing push, to be sure: a parade of stars including Jason Momoa, Oprah, J.J. Abrams, and Big Bird graced Apple’s stage. Apple promised that the streaming service would become “the new home for the world’s most creative storytellers.”

But the spectacle couldn’t distract from the fact that the important details were missing.

What’s worth watching, and when?

Absent from today’s event was any mention of when we could expect to see these shows arrive on Apple’s new service. Apple said that Apple TV Plus will launch in the fall, but it didn’t say which series will be available at launch, how often new series would arrive, or whether Apple will release shows on a weekly basis or all at once for binge-watching, like Netflix does.

Apple did play a brief video montage teasing several shows, but the montage didn’t do the job that full trailers would

have in fleshing out why we'd want to watch each series. Mostly, Apple just let a bunch of Hollywood stars talk about their hopes and dreams for the service. We know there's a science fiction show called *See* featuring Jason Momoa, we know Steven Spielberg is bringing back a nearly hundred-year-old fantasy anthology called *Amazing Stories*, and Oprah is making a documentary on workplace harassment called *Toxic Labor*, as well as an untitled one on mental health.

Here's the full list of shows Apple teased onstage — and a second, larger list of the video projects that the company has greenlit so far.

How much?

Apple also didn't tell us how much anything would cost. There had been rumors before today's event that Apple would make its original content free as a way to lure customers onto the service before they subscribed to bundles of networks including HBO, Starz, and Showtime, with Apple making its money by taking a cut of the subscription revenue.

But it seems like that won't necessarily be the case. On stage today, Apple also announced a *separate* TV service called Apple TV Channels, where streaming services like HBO will be available a la carte, letting you "pay for only the channels you want." Apple TV Channels will launch in May, several months before Apple TV Plus, which makes it seems less likely that Apple's content will be a giveaway to draw in customers.

We also don't know how much Apple will charge to subscribe to one of those other channels — rumor was they'd each cost an additional $10 a month — or if any sort of bundles will be offered at a discount. Will we actually save money by going with Apple instead of paying separately? All Apple has said for now is that its own service will be ad-free.

Why Apple instead of competitors?

We know that Apple is putting a heavy focus on services because it can no longer count on selling iPhones to drive revenue growth. But why consumers will want to pay attention to *these* services remains an open question — particularly when it comes to streaming TV, where services like Netflix, HBO, and Hulu are already popular, established brands with their own streaming apps and huge back catalogs of many, many things to watch. It's still not clear exactly who TV Plus is meant to appeal to.

Apple let its recruited talent do most of the talking and explanation today. It brought up Jason Momoa, J.J. Abrams, Jennifer Aniston, and Reese Witherspoon. But we didn't hear much from Apple itself on why it picked these shows to develop, beyond some broad platitudes about storytelling. TV and movies are a completely new space for Apple to dive into — one that involves complicated decisions around content, taste, and culture. Apple hasn't quite answered how it'll handle those responsibilities, but today showed that Apple is at the very least willing to spend big to make a name for itself in TV.

https://www.theverge.com/2019/3/25/18281333/apple-tv-plus-streaming-many-questions-missing-details-event-2019