Disney is launching a new Star-branded streaming service internationally

Disney plans to launch a new general entertainment streaming platform overseas in 2021 under the Star brand name, CEO Bob Chapek announced today. Chapek didn't give too many details about the platform, including in which countries Star would launch or pricing, but he noted that it would include content from ABC, FX, Freeform, Searchlight, and 20th Century Studios.

Star will not carry licensed content, which is different from Disney's other general entertainment streaming service, Hulu. More information is expected to be announced at an upcoming investors day that will focus on plans for Disney Plus, Hulu, ESPN Plus, and Star. The announcement comes as Disney hits major streaming milestones, including surpassing 60 million Disney Plus subscribers worldwide, and 100 million subscribers overall to its streaming offerings – Hulu, ESPN Plus, and Disney Plus. Streaming remains the lone bright spot for the company, which saw major revenue drops this quarter.

"In terms of the general entertainment offering internationally, we want to mirror our successful Disney Plus strategy by using our Disney Plus technical platform, bringing in content we already own and distributing it under a successful international brand that we also already own, which is, of course, Star," Chapek said.

The launch of Star also brings up another important question: what about Hulu? Former CEO Bob Iger announced that Disney was targeting an international launch in 2021, but Chapek said in May that the company had no immediate plans to "make any

investment in that business internationally.” Chapek didn’t say if Star is replacing Hulu, but he spent some time explaining why the company is launching a general entertainment service under Star instead of just expanding Hulu internationally.

“I think it’s important to look at the differences at how we plan to enter the market,” Chapek said. “Hulu aggregates third party content; this will not…Hulu has no brand awareness outside of the US.”

Disney Stars Studio is a big brand overseas compared to Hulu, which is a US-specific name. When Disney acquired Indian media and entertainment conglomerate Star India and subsequent streaming service HotStar in 2019 as part of the Fox deal, the company changed the name to create Disney Plus HotStar, uniting the two brands. Now, Star is known as Disney’s Star India. Having “Star” become the international brand name, on top of Disney Plus, makes sense.

But does this mean Hulu also heading to international territories? Or is Star replacing Hulu entirely? *The Verge* has reached out to Disney for clarification.

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