NBCUniversal set to launch standalone streaming service in 2020

NBCUniversal is joining the streaming wars, announcing that it will launch its own standalone streaming service in 2020.

An ad-supported version of the streaming service will be free for NBC TV subscribers in the United States, and will also be made available to Comcast Cable and Sky subscribers internationally, too. Paid versions of the app, which include an ad-free version for those who don't want to sit through commercials, will also be available for $12.99, according to a CNBC report. This will allow cord cutters who don't subscribe to NBC to access the streaming service, too.

Much like CBS All Access, NBCUniversal's streaming service will offer original programming for subscribers alongside its catalog of titles. Shows like *30 Rock* and *The Good Place* will be available to stream through NBCUniversal's service, hypothetically. Other series, however, like *ER* and *Friends*, which aired on NBC in the '90s, but are technically owned by Warner Bros., may not be available to stream. The network's press release states, "NBCUniversal will continue to license content to other studios and platforms, while retaining rights to certain titles for its new service." It's unclear what those shows may be at this time. *30 Rock*, for example, is currently available on Hulu.

NBCUniversal also has a 30 percent stake in Hulu. Analysts started speculating in 2018 that NBCUniversal would sell its stake in Hulu to Disney, which took a 60 percent majority control of the platform following its acquisition of Fox.

Still, Comcast, NBCUniversal’s parent company, brought on three NBC executives as board members for Hulu in September 2018, suggesting the company wasn’t willing to sell its stake just yet. Hulu recently announced that it has more than 25 million subscribers in the United States alone, which is approximately half of Netflix’s current US subscriber base of 58 million. If Disney gains total control, the goal is to bring Hulu to an international audience and increase its subscriber count alongside new content.

Other companies like Warner Bros., AT&T, and Disney are gearing up to launch their own standalone streaming services later this year. All three companies are relying on their own catalogs and standalone, exclusive offerings to bring in subscribers and compete with mega streaming services like Hulu and Netflix.

Comcast and NBCUniversal could continue licensing content to platforms like Netflix and Hulu, while retaining its hand in Hulu and developing new original content for its own streaming service. More information is expected to be announced during Comcast’s investors call on January 23rd.

There is no launch window for the platform beyond 2020.

https://www.theverge.com/2019/1/14/18182624/nbc-streaming-service-disney-hulu-att-warner-bros-netflix