

Roku's new super cheap TVs will be Best Buy exclusives, which explains the price

Roku's upcoming Select and Plus TV sets will be a Best Buy exclusive, and the streaming hardware company is planning to cross-pollinate its ad data with Best Buy's own ad system. The partnership includes the whole TV lineup that Roku announced at CES this year, and outside brands can partner with the duo to target product ads to Roku viewers based on their Best Buy shopping habits.

The news comes just as Roku released its system OS 12 software that's rolling out in the coming weeks. It'll include new content discovery features, local news channels, and news recommendations that are curated to streamers and is "powered by AI," according to the press release.

The new system also includes new location-based experiences, which should enable things like personalized sports relevant to the area in the coming weeks. Roku's updated sports experience highlights relevant games based on viewing habits and will now include CBS Sports, MLB.TV, the NBA app, and NBC Sports.

Effectively, Best Buy will share customers' purchase history with Roku, and Roku can advertise against it and push targeted ads to users of the streaming devices. While the retailer-to-hardware advertising partnership is fairly unique, smart TV ad tracking has been active for years – getting companies like Vizio in trouble with the FTC. Vizio had been monitoring viewers' watching habits on over 11 million TVs by default without consent.

As a result of Vizio's lawsuit, smart TVs must have the ability to turn off tracking. Vizio's former CTO Bill Baxter spoke on *The Vergecast* in 2019 explaining that TV companies are in a cutthroat business, and ads essentially subsidize the hardware to keep prices low for customers.

Roku is a company that can deliver both streaming boxes – and now TVs – for cheaper, and the deal with Best Buy helps ensure that continues. It's not likely, however, to make streaming platforms themselves suck any less.

<https://www.theverge.com/2023/3/10/23633754/roku-best-buy-select-plus-tv-ads-partnership>