

## Notes on Cord Cutting - by Jordan Viener

**Cord Cutting-** The practice of canceling or forgoing a cable television subscription or landline telephone connection in favor of an alternative Internet-based or wireless service (Oxford Dictionary)

The trend of cord cutting can be traced back to 2010, the first year since the invention of cable TV that pay TV subscriptions declined opposed to increased. What made this transition possible was the rise of streaming options such as Netflix, Hulu, and easy on-demand options such as iTunes. Since the initial decline, streaming services have grown every year while traditional TV services have been losing subscribers nearly every quarter. With newer services meant to replace live TV with streaming live, backed by large companies such as Sling TV (Dish Network), Playstation Vue (Sony), YouTube TV (Google), Hulu Live TV (Disney), and DirecTV Now (AT&T) this is no longer a trend, this is the future. With that in mind let's take a look at what each of these services has to offer.

**Sling TV-** Sling TV was the first cable streaming replacement, and is considered by many to be the closest to the "A la carte TV" ideal that many want in the post cable world. Indeed Sling TV offers both the cheapest base packages and the most interest specific add on packages. They offer two base models the "orange" and "blue" packages. Orange costs \$20 and offers 30 channels, Blue costs \$25 and offers 45 channels plus regional sports networks and a few local channels. In addition to these basic packages you can add a DVR for \$5 and pick any amount of "add-ons" that cater to a variety of interests.

One potential drawback is that Sling is limited to three screens at time.

**Playstation Vue-** While Sling TV strives to be "A la carte TV" Playstation Vue strives to be more like a true cable replacement. Vue is a lot more expensive, starting at \$40 with 45 channels, but with a more complete and diverse line up. The next package for Vue is \$45 62 channels, and seemingly by far the better value. One of main reasons Vue is so much more expensive is you get all of the local channels and regional sports. Vue only has a few add-ons, the main one being a \$10 sports package. You can also add premium channels. Overall Vue is better if you just want to break away from Cable without truly leaving the experience behind.

Limited to five screens at a time.

**Youtube TV**-Youtube TV is the newest kid on the block, and also the most cut and dry. With YouTube TV you pay \$35 for 51 channels plus YouTube Red (YouTube “premium” tier, \$9.99 a month). That’s basically it, 51 channels and 4 add-ons if you want them. You get all the local channels with YouTube and a pretty healthy blend of the rest of cable, along with Fox and NBC regional networks. The main issue for sports fans regarding YouTube TV is, unlike the other two on the list so far, there is no “extra sports” package to get more sports if you want them.

The biggest plus for this option is the fact you can have six screens on at once if you have a large household.

**Hulu TV**- Hulu TV is very very similar to YouTube TV. While not as cut and dry, it’s close. You get 56 channels for \$39.99, just like YouTube TV, you also get Hulu (the 7.99 with ads version) thrown into the deal. I would say Sling TV and PS Vue go for different targets, YouTube TV and Hulu TV go for the same market and are very comparable in price and what you get. That said I think for the small difference in price Hulu is the better option. The fact you get Hulu standard as well cuts out one bill for most cord cutters and the channels you get, particularly CBS sports and the Food Network, that you don’t get on YouTube TV make it a better bargain.

The only issue is Hulu is geo-locked, meaning you can’t use it while on the road. This is a dealbreaker for some, but if not for you than Hulu TV beats out YouTube TV.

**DirecTV Now**- DirecTV Now is not cord cutting in the usual sense. It’s DirecTV, but instead of using a satellite dish you use internet connection. This may sound like exaggeration, it’s not. For one thing all the other website were very upfront about cost and what you get for how much money, it was a flat out pain to find out what channels were in what package and how much they cost. Once I finally got to the price I found this in the fine print “Plus taxes. For 12 mos. w/24-mo. [agreement], before autopay credit. \$76/mo. in months 13-24 (subject to change).” To clarify this is the “\$40” base package. Simply put this is worst of the major five for cutting the cord, it’s not even really cutting the cord, it just makes your TV digital.