

SIGN IN

DEVIL IN THE DETAILS —

AT&T's "\$35" DirecTV streaming will cost \$60 unless you sign up right away

Standard prices range from \$35 to \$70 a month, plus \$5 extra for HBO.

JON BRODKIN - 11/28/2016, 2:42 PM

AT&T

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Enlarge / Channel lineups for AT&T's DirecTV Now online streaming service.

When AT&T CEO Randall Stephenson last month **announced** a new DirecTV online video streaming service, he was clear about a few things: it would provide more than 100 channels, including "all the premium" channels customers want, and cost just \$35 a month. As a result, AT&T has gotten a lot of headlines about its \$35, 100-channel streaming service over the past few weeks.

But today we found out the full pricing details, and they're a bit less appealing than Stephenson's sales pitch. The offer of 100 channels for \$35 is only good for customers who sign up when the service

becomes available or shortly after that. Once the standard pricing sets in, new customers will pay \$35 for 60 channels. The other standard packages are 80 channels for \$50 a month, 100 channels for \$60, and 120 channels for \$70.

Premium channels HBO and Cinemax will cost an extra \$5 a month in addition to the base price. The service will be available in the US only.

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The prices [announced today](#), with the service scheduled to launch on Wednesday this week, fill in details not mentioned by Stephenson in an [interview](#) with *The Wall Street Journal* on October 25. Stephenson said \$35 would get customers "all in" on premium channels, including those from Time Warner—which owns HBO and is in the process of merging with AT&T.

It's no surprise that HBO costs extra, though the \$5 additional charge is small compared to the cost of HBO on a cable provider or from HBO's standalone streaming service. Still, the separate charge for HBO undercuts Stephenson's promise that \$35 will get customers all of Time Warner's premium content. Stephenson also didn't mention last month that the \$35 offer would only be good for a short time.

"[DirecTV Now] is for the first time, 100-plus premium channels, all right, this isn't the junk nobody wants," Stephenson said at the time. "This is 100-plus premium channels, purely over the top, a mobile-centric platform for \$35 a month. It has all of [Time Warner's] content, it has all the premium content you know and love and like to watch, \$35 a month, and that includes your mobile streaming costs, streaming it over the mobile Internet. So, \$35, pretty much all in." Stephenson mentioned mobile streaming costs in relation to AT&T [exempting](#) DirecTV Now from its mobile data caps.

If you do want the \$35 deal (or at least \$40 if you want a premium channel like HBO), remember to act quickly—signups will be at [this website](#). If you get in on the special offer, your price will *sort of* be locked in to the promotional rate. You won't pay as much as people who sign up later, but the \$35 price will rise in the future to keep up with the cost of AT&T's programming contracts.

"Customers who sign up for this offer will continue to enjoy this special price for as long as you keep the package, subject only to future reasonable programming price increases applicable to all packages," [AT&T's announcement today said](#).

On the plus side, today's announcement included a perk not mentioned by Stephenson: customers who pre-pay for three months of DirecTV Now can get a free Apple TV with Siri Remote. Customers can also get an Amazon Fire TV Stick by pre-paying for one month of the service.

When contacted by Ars, an AT&T spokesperson declined to say how long the \$35, 100-channel offer will be available. The full channel lineups will be listed on Wednesday when the service goes live, but you can see many of the available channels in the image on top of this story.

DirecTV Now will allow two concurrent streams per account. If you're a sports fan or like to watch local content, note that AT&T says that live sports and local channels will have "limited availability." Regional sports networks will be available in some markets, except in the entry-level 60-channel package.

AT&T purchased DirecTV last year and currently is **trying to buy Time Warner** (the programming company that owns HBO and CNN, not the similarly named cable company). "For the first time in history, we have control over the full stack," AT&T Entertainment Group CEO John Stankey said at the company's announcement event today.

DirecTV Now will work on any home or mobile Internet connection without requiring a cable set-top box or satellite hookup. AT&T's decision to exempt DirecTV Now from the data caps on its own mobile network has been controversial, with AT&T being forced to address **accusations** from the Federal Communications Commission that the arrangement may violate net neutrality rules. AT&T charges other companies for the same data cap exemptions enjoyed by its subsidiary DirecTV but claims that it is **treating competitors fairly**.

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