

Tech Tips for Seniors

Cutting the Cord

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If you are tired of paying for hundreds of TV channels you don't care about, there are numerous "cut-the-cord" options out there.

Consider those options and you may be able to save hundreds of dollars a year in recurring TV costs ... and you'll get only what you pay for.

Before doing this, be sure to weigh the benefit of convenience to subscribing to a package broadband TV service such as Verizon, Comcast, DirecTV or Dish Network.

Cutting the cord means disconnecting your TV set from the coaxial cable plugged into the set-top box you rent from a cable TV provider. If you do that you'll be able to cancel your monthly cable TV subscription and be able to discard or return that set-top box.

You can also “cut the cord” to your landline phone, but that's a topic for another time.

To cut the cord, you'll need to subscribe to an Internet service that arrives through a wire from the street to your house. That wire connects to a modem which then beams (routes) a wireless Internet signal (Wi-Fi) throughout your house.

That piece of equipment is also called a router because it receives one Internet signal and “routes” that signal over the air to numerous devices, including computers,

mobile phones, printers, streaming TV devices and other devices such as doorbell cameras.

A Wi-Fi connection to the Internet from Verizon or Comcast can cost about \$40-\$100 per month, depending on the speed of the transmission. A 100 megabyte-per-second speed (Mbps) speed is about all anybody needs for normal video streaming. Routers can be bought at stores or rented from the Internet provider.

To view content such as TV stations, movies and other content offered by the broadband cable providers, you will need to purchase a smart TV set or a streaming device that connects your TV set to that Wi-Fi signal. This type of device essentially replaces a rented set-top box.

The content that arrives via a Wi-Fi signal comes in a variety of bundles and apps such as Hulu, SlingTV, AT&T Now, Amazon Prime, Locast, PlutoTV, You Tube, ESPN+, AppleTV+ and Disney+. More information about content bundles and apps is in the “TV Content Options” article on this website.

Here are a few devices that will stream that Wi-Fi content from a router to your TV set:

- Amazon’s Fire TV Cube and Fire TV Stick
- Apple TV
- Google Chromecast
- Nvidia Shield
- Roku

Each device offers its own array of channels or apps. Some are built into the device, while other channels/apps can be downloaded via a Wi-Fi connection. Some

of those apps are free and others charge a content fee.

A web search for each device will show you their lists channels and programming packages.

You can also search the Internet with phrases such as “cut the cord” for more information.

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If you have questions about any of this, feel free to make a “Technology Tips” appointment on Tuesday mornings at Generations, when the center opens. Just call the main number: 215-723-5841.

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