

# *Tech Tips for Seniors*

## **Get What You Pay For**

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Nobody wants to pay for something he or she doesn't want or need. However, that happens every month as most seniors pay for television service offered by the major broadband cable-TV companies.

Hundreds of TV channels are beamed into our homes, but unless you watch dozens of them on a regular basis it's likely you are paying for a lot of content you don't view.

The good news is that is convenient to be able to choose what you want to watch from one large menu delivered via a set-top box attached to your TV set.

The monthly cost includes a choice of content packages of channels, a set-top box rented for at least \$10 per box and several mandatory fees.

If the TV stations you watch are limited to only three or four major networks, for example, you can view that content in other ways at no charge. Your only cost will be paying for a Wi-Fi connection at home or mobile network subscription.

Remember the “good old days” when TV reception was free, except for the cost of a rooftop antenna?

Here are three ways to view those same over-the-air TV channels today for a fraction of the cost of a cable TV subscription:

- Purchase an inexpensive indoor antenna and attach it to any TV set. The antenna is a small flat device that should be placed near a window. It operates with a remote controller and will deliver to your TV all of the over-the-air local channels.
- Download to a cell phone or tablet an app named Locast (Locast.org). The app is free and there is a voluntary monthly donation of \$5 to Locast, a non-profit organization. That app will let you watch free over-the-air channels when you are near a Wi-Fi signal. You can also instruct your cell phone to connect to “cellular data”; you then pay a mobile phone company only for the time you watch the channels and, of course, for the phone.
- Download the Locast app to a streaming device attached to your TV set. You’ll need to pay for that device and for Internet service in your house to do that.

I'll write more another time about TV viewing options, including streaming Internet TV content, for those who want to watch more than the basic free over-the-air programs.

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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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