

The Luddite Lounge

Episode 4 Transcript, 09/25/15

www.ludditelounge.com/episode4

You're listening to The Luddite Lounge where we're serving up news, views and how-tos for the digital world we've all come to depend on—whether we like it or not!

Hey there glad you can join me today in The Luddite Lounge. I'm Elizabeth Kricfalusi, publisher of the Tech for Luddites blog and Chief Luddite.

This is Episode 4 of The Lounge and I'm very excited to have my first ever guest on the show. And I'm especially thrilled that it's Ryan Downey, also known as The Streaming Advisor, who's here to talk about all the updates—announced and rumored—happening with the biggest names in streaming media players. If you want to stay on top of all these happenings, I definitely recommend you check out Ryan's website, thestreamingadvisor.com.

So let's get started. You can find show notes with related links at ludditelounge.com/episode4.

Elizabeth

Welcome, Ryan! You are the first-ever guest on The Luddite Lounge, so I hope that makes you feel suitably special.

Ryan

I'm very excited.

Elizabeth

You publish The Streaming Advisor website, which is very cool. It covers way more about streaming than I could ever cover as a section on Tech for Luddites. How long have you been publishing your site?

Ryan

We just celebrated two years.

Elizabeth

Wow, that's great. You kind of alluded to this earlier: this is turning out to be an incredibly busy season for streaming media announcements. We've already had both Apple TV and Amazon Fire TV, have already made their announcements at big events, in conjunction with announcing other products, but still, they have big news for their players. Google's having an event at the end of this month, where they're going to be introducing the next version of the Chromecast, and then there's also ... I think it's a

fairly well-regarded rumor that there might be a new Roku coming before the end of the year, as well, a Roku 4, so if all of this is true, even with what we've had already, this is going to be a big season for you.

Ryan

Yeah. It was kind of exhausting. To tell you the truth, though, I was glad that Apple and Amazon announced their stuff within a week, because I really didn't want to have to keep covering rumors. I hate covering rumors. You'll notice that some of the stuff is true, and at least a third of it usually isn't. And one of the things I'm so surprised about with Apple TV was they kept saying "a slimmer model, a slimmer model", and you get this speaker-size thing from Apple TV, but the ... In general, yeah. I don't know so much about the Roku 4 stuff. I haven't seen a lot that was straight-on. The last thing that I read just said "They probably will; why not?" Sort of their take on it. "They ought to because everybody else has," but ...

Elizabeth

Cool. Before we actually sort of compare them all, I just thought maybe we could go through each, what I'm calling ... I call them "The Big Four", and go through them and just talk a little bit about what we do know, and what we suspect, and then we can come back to, again, more of a discussion of the space in general.

Ryan

Sure.

Elizabeth

We'll do it in the order of, kind of, how they announced themselves. A couple weeks ago, it was the big Apple TV announcement. Some of the high-level, big things coming out with the new model: they're going to have a new remote that has touchscreen, and motion detection. You've already mentioned the fact that it's going to support Siri, and they're investing in a big app store, so there's going to be a lot more content available for it. Some behind-the-scenes performance enhancements. The one thing that they're not, they didn't announce, that some people were surprised about, was no support for 4K yet. With all of that, what are your initial impressions about the Apple TV announcement?

Ryan

I thought the announcement, they were announcing a product that wasn't done, because you notice, if you watched the announcement, you really didn't see the app store, and 9 to 5 Mac had one of the best reviews of the Apple TV that I've seen. Because they didn't just sort of parrot what was announced in the press release, which most people do, they just ... I don't know why, but they would say, "Yeah, we got hands-on with the Apple TV. Here's that game with the baseball bat, and it has the remote, and it's going to have an app store." 9 to 5 Mac does a great job about really showing it, and they made the point, they said, "Well, the app store doesn't have a lot right now, but within the next month we expect

to see it grow." If they make a real effort on the app store, that's going to be tremendous, because that was one of the main criticisms of the product in the first place.

Elizabeth

Yeah, compared to their current competitors they were definitely lacking. I guess the whole point of the announcement was they were opening this up to developers so that they could now make the apps. And I'm not a person who's really into the whole app ecosystem at all, or Mac ecosystem, I should say, but my understanding is because they're both running on IOS 9, the Apple TV and all the mobile devices, that a lot of the developers who have existing apps for phones and tablets won't have to do that much work to make them work on the Apple TV. Which is why they're saying, "Well, it may not take that long to start getting a good library of apps available."

Ryan

Something that I think is really cool about it is because the remote has that motion sensor, it means that tablet apps will port over easily, and something I want to see is, does this make an impact on social gaming, because that's ... Gaming is one of the things that they're pushing, but they're not trying to push to compete, they're not trying to pretend to be the PlayStation 4 the way that, say, the group at Nexus Player did. There's a whole lot of people out there who play things like Farmville and Candy Crush, and this fun little time-killer, puzzle-type games, you're going to be able to use those on Fire TV, it looks like ... Sorry, not ... I'm sorry ...

Elizabeth

Apple TV.

Ryan

Yeah, I meant the Apple TV. By doing that, I think that's an ingenious move for them. I'm really curious to see if that will work, because it's ... I don't have a game system, but I do play Monster's Legends regularly, and it's just an iPad game, and so I think that that, between that and just the app store in general, I think that's the big deal with it. It looks like a beautiful system, and I like the way that Siri works, like ...

Elizabeth

Yeah. You brought up a couple, especially ... I'm not a gamer at all; I don't do any of them online. I used to play Scrabble. That was it. I've never gotten into the Candy Crushes, or the Angry Birds, or any of the big ones. I know a lot of people do, obviously, so if they can now start doing that on their TV instead of just on their phone or their tablet, I'm sure that's going to be a big selling point, and then the other thing that you ...

The whole Siri thing, this is another thing: in some ways, it's even funny that I cover streaming media, because there's so much of it that I don't care less about. And, to me, all this voice stuff has no ...

Has, actually, no value to me. I have the Amazon Echo because I got it at a really good price, and I wanted to test it out, but I hear all these reviews about how wonderful it is, and I just don't get it. The Amazon Fire TV has had a certain amount of voice control for a while, it has the search capability, and I almost never use that, either. So it's weird, because these things that everybody's making a big deal about are things that I don't really care about, but what kind of things ... You said you're interested in how Siri ... You like how Siri is working with it, so, what's an example of something that you think is good?

Ryan

The thing that they're doing different with the new generation, both Amazon and Apple, is for the voice searches for the Fire TV and, say, the Roku, were almost exactly the same as typing, but now it ... You get a serialized show, or something that had a billion episodes, like Seinfeld: shows like that lend themselves to conversational, like, "Do you remember when Elaine ... There was that mannequin, and it looked just like Elaine, and it freaked her out," or, "Do you remember the episode about the guy with the TV guides?" You can actually go in and say, "Show me the Seinfeld episode about the Elaine mannequin". You can find ... You don't have to go through IMDb, or something like that, and find what's in ... That's different, and that's kind of cool.

Elizabeth

That's really ... It's really funny that you say that, because yesterday I happened to be watching, I was in the Hulu app, and I was just sort of scrolling through it, and they had ... I saw that they had old episodes of Scrubs, which was this show that I really liked. And, in fact, I was going through the episodes, and I was looking for a specific episode, scrolling through them, but none of the descriptions matched what I remembered about the episode. But now that you say that, maybe I can go in and say, "Hey, show me the episode where Carla found out that she was pregnant."

Ryan

Right: "Show me the episode where Turk talks about being on the college magazine twice."

Elizabeth

This is why I'm glad I've got you on the show, because I don't pay attention to some of these things, because I don't ... I haven't used them a lot, and I don't have ... This is your area, so you can really delve deep into it. That's a really great insight that I didn't know.

Another thing about the Apple TV, very curious on your point of view on this, which is the new price point. I guess we're going to have two different models with different amounts of storage: one will be \$149, and the other's \$199. That's significantly more expensive, not only than their current model, even before they did the big, steep discount. But then you have competitors, particularly the Roku, so I'm wondering what your thoughts are on ... Is what they're going to be offering worth that extra money, or is it just because they're Apple and they can get away with charging whatever they want because Apple people are going to buy Apple products?

Ryan

I think you might have hit it right there. Apple always has this kind of premium attitude. They might as well just have that on top of the Apple store: "We are Apple: we're expensive because we're better than everybody", because people definitely buy in. But Apple never pushed the Apple TV the way that I thought they should have, but when you talk about why would somebody buy it, or Apple people, this ... These sorts of things are really amazing accessories for Apple products. They're nice products standing on their own, but I think that they might be able to get away with the price point just by saying, "Look at all the things you do if you use your iPad, or your new iPhones are going to do this and that with it."

Elizabeth

I have to admit ...

Ryan

We think that it's too expensive. I wouldn't be surprised to see the price of at least one bottle, like the 149, drop to 100 after a month or two of it being out.

Elizabeth

Yeah, it would be interesting to see. One of the things I like, I don't use my Apple. I have all four of the big four because I was writing about them; I needed them to learn about them, and I never really used my Apple TV for very much. The one thing now that I have been using it for is the Air Play feature. I found that really handy for when there's no ... None of those sort of things have an app for a certain TV network, but I can stream it on my iPhone, and I can Air Play it to the Apple TV. I think that's good, but I'm also wondering, I think, again, about this price point, especially since they're not ...

I mentioned earlier how there are certain things that I don't care about, like gaming. I don't know anything about it, I don't care about it, but the other thing that I really don't care about is the 4K thing. I don't even stream most of my stuff in High Def because I don't see enough value to it to use up that extra bandwidth, and slow down the performance. But it is a big deal, everybody's talking about it, so Apple TV is not going to have that. I would think that's really going to hurt them, especially with this premium pricing.

Ryan

It all depends on how many people start buying 4K TVs. Right now, hardly anybody has one. In a way, it makes it not future-proof.

Elizabeth

I think there's going to be a really big push on them in this year's Black Friday madness. Maybe I'm wrong about that. Like you said, the whole future-proofing, maybe it's not right now, but it's coming, so it ... I just thought it was interesting when they're missing something that most people are talking about

as an important sort of future technology, they don't have and the idea they're going to charge so much more than everybody else, so it will be interesting to see how that plays out.

Ryan

I would really expect to see the price come down, because Apple isn't immune to that. They'll release something at one point, and all of their customers, the fanboys, will buy everything up immediately, and then, "Whoops", two weeks later it goes on something I'm probably going to get burned on it. I'm going to buy an Apple TV when it comes out for the exact same purpose: I want to review it, I want to see it, I want to be able to keep up with it, but after being all, "I'll pay \$145", and then it'll go to 110 a couple weeks later ... I guess it all depends on how much they sell it. If people are buying it up like hotcakes, they won't need to change it.

Something you've hit on a couple of times is what everybody is saying, and that's something that I've actually noticed, and it kind of chaps me a bit. Because what happens is, these companies do a roll-out, they put out press releases, and they have their bullet points: 4K, this, that, and the other, gaming, and you'll see almost every news site, even the big boys, like The New York Times, CNN, the Washington Post, and they're just kind of parroting whatever was in the release, and that's something ... I don't know whether it's because streaming isn't a big, big subject, but I see very little follow-up from most outlets. So what you get is everybody fixating on something like plugging in headphones on a Roku remote, or something like that, as though it's something monumental, and it's just because it was the thing that was pointed out in the press release.

Elizabeth

Yeah. That could be. Let's move on to the Amazon Fire TV. They just announced that, I guess, just last week ... It was just last week. Wow. It's kind of ... The top lines on that: They are going to support 4K, integration with Alexa, which, for people who don't know, that's basically Amazon's version of Siri. They're adding in a Mayday feature, which is available on some Kindle Fire tablets now, which is live support, if you need it. What were your initial impressions about that announcement?

Ryan

First off, I think that Mayday move is brilliant. I love the idea, because it saves so many grandchildren and the children, the problem of the parents going, "I don't understand!" Of course, I mean, that's why you sort of started your site, you know: "I don't get it."

Elizabeth

Right.

Ryan

I really like that feature. Like I said, I do like what they do with Siri ... I guess I confuse it with ...

Elizabeth

Alexa.

Ryan

Like you said, it is really Siri, but ... I like what they do with Alexa, but I want to see it in action. Just reading about it is one thing, but I really want to play with it. It's supposed to do the same thing. It's supposed to look for shows, and things like that, specific episodes, because it connects up with the Internet, basically. It's almost like it's using Google to find what you're looking for instead of just an all-the-regular search algorithm.

Elizabeth

Mm-hmm.

Ryan

Something that I think is going to be nice is that it can call up like a weather report, or something like that. Because a lot of people like watching the news reports because they just want to see the rain, what's it going to be like, or what's the traffic like, and this is going to be so we can get that kind of information, so you can wake up, have your coffee, and say, "Show me the traffic at highway 95," or whatever. "What's the weather going to be like today?"

Elizabeth

Yeah.

Ryan

You can get it, and then you don't have to listen to them talk about Wife Swap or something like that for 20 minutes, before they get to the weather that you want to watch.

Elizabeth

That's an interesting point. One thing I noticed after the announcement, almost immediately after the announcement, I noticed on the Amazon website that they were advertising the stick version of the Fire TV as being with the voice remote, for \$49, which is ten dollars more than the current one, and then a couple days later I noticed that you could still get the Fire TV stick without the voice remote, just the standard remotes, for, still, the \$39. But I don't know if that was part of the initial launch, or if maybe they got some pushback on not having a \$39 version anymore, and so they decided, okay, we will give people the option. Do you know if that was, it was always planned to have the two versions, or if it was, maybe, some sort of reaction to the response to the announcement?

Ryan

Yeah, when they rolled out the announcement about being able to buy with the voice remote, they actually said you're still going to be able to buy the one without the voice remote.

Elizabeth

Okay, I missed that. That's good to know. I think that's smart, because that \$39 price point is just, it's so attractive. For what you get for it, the Amazon Fire Stick is my number one streaming device that I use the most often, and because I ... I don't care about the voice remote ... That's a nice extra for people like me.

Ryan

I totally agree. I got my dad one of those for Father's Day. The Fire TV Stick was a \$39. Those are really, really good products for the price point, because I look at that and I compare it to something like the Chromecasts, and I think, "Okay, here's something that has all these apps, all these capabilities, for five bucks more than this guy does.

Elizabeth

It's interesting because ... I don't know. A few weeks ago, and you reported a couple of times on your site, was that the box version of the Amazon Fire TV disappeared from Amazon's website, and this is before they announced that they were going to be making new announcements, so there was a lot of discussion: "Does this mean they are coming out with a new Fire TV," etc. I have to say, my initial thought, because maybe they're getting rid of the box version altogether, because the stick just does so much. Again, I have both of them, and there's really nothing in the box version for me that makes it worth the extra \$50 or \$60, but, obviously, I was wrong: they are coming out with a new box version, as well, with a lot of extra features. But that stick is just such an incredible deal, I think, especially being so tied into all the Amazon movies, and if you have a Prime membership, all the benefits you get from that.

Ryan

It's a nice interface, and it does a lot, there's a lot of perks. The big difference with the box and stick is the processor and the ability to plug ... You plug the box into a direct network connection. That's always more dependable than anything.

Elizabeth

Yes, that's true. If you don't have good Wi-Fi, that makes a big difference. Let's move onto the Chromecast, because you mentioned ... You brought it up, in terms of how it compares to the Fire TV's stick and I'm kind of the same way. It's like, there's going to be a new Chromecast announcement. What I'm seeing, and this now qualifies as rumor department, because they haven't actually issued this, is that there might be an entirely new look to it, but it's got better Wi-Fi, and faster loading. Apparently, there was a thread on Reddit, where somebody who claims to work for Amazon... or to work for Google, and who worked on the Chromecast, has said that there's not actually going to be anything that the typical user would consider to be a major update. Do you know any more than that about what's expected for the Chromecast?

Ryan

We went something ... There was an FCC filing a long time ago, actually, that involved the Chromecast. It was ... The big deal was, it looks like Google's working on a new Chromecast, and we found the same thing, that there wasn't anything particularly amazing about hardware, or anything else that made what was coming out eventually look like a big upgrade. It's something I'm wondering about what this whole thing is. There's conflicting announcements; there's information about a possible new Chromecast, yet, also, this Googlecast Audio?

Elizabeth

Yes. That, actually, looks interesting, because, if I'm understanding it correctly, you can plug that into your old speakers that you have as long as they have a headphone jack, and that will let you stream music from your devices to them. I think that has a lot of potential, again, without having seen it or knowing exactly how it works. The concept sounds like a winner to me.

Ryan

Exactly. What I have to wonder is, this picture that we're seeing, this grainy, lollipop looking pictures that we're seeing, I wonder if that's actually the audio thing and not a new Chromecast.

Elizabeth

Maybe. I was wondering, too, because I looked at those, I was like, "really?" I don't ...

Ryan

Why would they completely, utterly change the look? That other one is branded very well. We know what that is. Why would you change it completely?

Elizabeth

Again, though, the Chromecast ... Actually, if they are coming out with better behind-the-scenes performance stuff, that will be good, because, if anything, I find the Chromecast, compared to the other devices, just isn't as stable and reliable in terms of having a good signal, good-quality signal that syncs well. So if they're fixing that, that will definitely be good, and if they're ... Apparently, they're keeping the same price, \$35, so that really appeals to the people who are looking for the ... A less expensive option.

Ryan

I think the Chromecast is a great other TV, but I don't think it's a good primary. For a primary, I want the interface that you get from the other group, The Big Four, but I was talking to somebody last night about ... My wife, we were waiting for our daughter at Girl Scouts, she started talking to me about cable, and cutting cable, and things like that. When I was explaining to her some options, she said, "Do I have to put that on all my TVs if I want to watch things from the Internet? That'll get expensive." I thought, I mentioned, "You can always do a Chromecast on one or two TVs if it's not a primary, because if you've got a tablet you've now got a way to watch that." Chromecast is so much different than the others

because it's really a receiver, you know? Like the Fire TV and everything else, it's got apps on it. But you need something to watch something on the Chromecasts.

Elizabeth

Especially now that two of the other ones have their own stick versions, as well. Anyway, I'm surprised, if they're going to be making a big deal about something that doesn't seem like there's a lot, going to be really noticeable, but, again, we ... Rumors, you know.

Ryan

It has better Wi-Fi. I think that will be a push, because you notice, they had to address the Wi-Fi issue, finally, and they released that adapter to allow you to plug the Chromecast into a network. Because even some people who had the thing right next to their router were still having problems with it, so I think that thing, honestly, I think that will be the big push. But, anyways, how much did they have to change? It's still one of the top-selling items in the electronics industry, I think number two or three on Amazon.

Elizabeth

I also hope they come up with a better ... That they make it work better with the Chrome browser casting, because I find that's almost completely useless, in terms of the lag, and the video and audio are always out of sync, and that's ... That is a great differentiator if they can get it working better, to be able to have, basically, anything on your Chrome browser mirrored to your TV. That's huge, but it doesn't work very well, now.

Ryan

Good call on that, because ever since they started it's been an experimental thing, or a beta feature, and, yeah, I've been waiting forever to see them get that perfect, because just from entertainment to even, just, presentation device sort of things, that could be a really useful utility that has never really been worked at, there. They're just concentrating so much on just casting from a tablet, or something. The only thing that I'm wondering is, will they get a better integration for apps that you've got on your device, and what can play on the Chromecast? I would love to see something like, if you've got 50 things that are compatible with the Chromecast on your phone, if you open up a Chromecast, I wish you would just categorize them, so you've got, "Hey, here's your movie apps that you've got that are ..."

Elizabeth

I did see, one of the reports they said, I saw, said that the new Chromecast app, itself, is probably going to have enhanced sort of search features, and stuff, so you're right, that would be a big help for people. So this could be an update that's good for people who are already used to Chromecast and are aware of its problems, and so it's like, "Hey, for \$35 I am now going to get one that is going to solve some of my problems," if, in fact, it does. I don't know if it has a lot of extra unique selling proposition, as they call it,

for people who don't have a box, or who don't have a system at all, and are kind of comparing them on all the other ones.

Ryan

I think you're right. These sorts of things are just wonderful stocking stuffers.

Elizabeth

Yes.

Ryan

Especially if the person already sorts of gets it.

Elizabeth

Right, exactly.

Ryan

Like, "Hey, look, Grandma! Look what I bought you? Here's how it works. Got a cellphone?" "Nooo..."

Elizabeth

As long as you've got something that you can actually cast from.

Ryan

Mm-hmm.

Elizabeth

Let's, again ... You already talked about this at the beginning of the episode, but let's go into it a little more detail about the Roku 4. Now, you're saying ... It's still very much in the rumor stage that they're going to do anything, and I agree. I have seen ... The things that I've seen mentioned, but, again, on the rumor scale, are things like the 4K. That might be a big one for them. The thing, better performance, any one of them is going to benefit from better performance, obviously, but other than that I'm not really hearing what people are even guessing could be in a Roku 4, especially since the Roku 3, it wasn't that long ago that it came out. It's less than a year. The "New" 3, which is a dumb way to do that. We call it the "3A".

Ryan

I found that so confusing, because I thought that Roku made a great move when they went away from the letters ...

Elizabeth

The XS and the XD, and, yeah.

Ryan

I made the point that, you know, how do you tell somebody what the difference between one and the other is if you're trying to explain it to ... If I worked at a store, it would be confounding.

Elizabeth

When they ... In their early years ... My first Roku was an XS, which I still really love, and it has the composite option, which is a big differentiator for Roku over all these other ones, for people who don't have HD TVs, or have extra TVs that they want to use that aren't HD. They used to ... There was a period where it was like, almost every three months they had a new version of the Roku, with a slightly different configuration, and then you had to sort of figure out, this one now has the remote with the jack, but now that one has the remote with the jack, and now this one has something different ... This one has the ethernet and that one doesn't. It was really confusing, now. I think when they did this last version, they did a good job of distinguishing between the different models, except for the naming. You know, keeping the same name as a previous model just doesn't make any sense to me at all.

Ryan

It caused confusion in the retail sector. Something that I looked at was Walmart. I would go to a Walmart, and they would have a display, the "New" Roku 3 with voice control. It would be prominently advertised, but the thing they had on the shelf was the old Roku 3.

Elizabeth

Right, yeah. Very confusing.

Ryan

I went to a point of making them open it. I was like, "Look, this isn't the same product that you're advertising." "Yes, it is." I said, "No, let's take a look." We'd open it up, and I'd say, "Look, the voice remote? This does not have a voice remote. This doesn't have a microphone." I'd look at them side by side and they'd be like, "Oh," but, yeah, the people there didn't even realize that they weren't selling what they were advertising, you know, when you call it all the same thing.

Elizabeth

Assuming that a new one comes out, the assumption is it will be a Roku 4, and, again, I mean, the Roku has multiple models. Is it going to be a Roku 4 with one of them has this ... There's a Roku 4 with this many capabilities, and then a Roku 4 with other capabilities, or are they just going to let you still buy the three, two, one, stick? Who knows?

Ryan

If they took everything off the market and re-branded, like, if they had a new Roku 1, and a new Roku 2, and it was a matter of the price point, it would be okay. But what you run into is you go to a forum, or a Facebook group, and someone says, "I've got the Roku 1," but when they say the Roku 1, they might be talking about the original Roku.

Elizabeth

Yeah. The whole thing, they did a very poor job on that part of the branding, but having said that, it's still ... They have such an advantage, in terms of the channels that they can offer, especially on the entertainment side. Amazon Fire TV and Apple TV, the new one, at least, will have a lot more sort of the casual gaming apps, probably, but in terms of the sheer number of video and TV show channels, Roku's got them all beat.

Ryan

Definitely. What ... Roku ... I sort of want to compare Roku to ... If you think of Amazon and Apple like exclusive stores, Roku is more like a mall with a bunch of stores in it.

Elizabeth

Right, and that's one of their advantages, because they don't have ... They don't have their own content interest. Apple TV is obviously, they push iTunes; Amazon pushes Instant Video. Roku is agnostic in terms of the content provider, so they are open to anybody, especially when you throw in all the private channels.

Ryan

Right, oh yeah the private... I think the private channels are the coolest thing, because they're cloud-based programs that, I mean, you could just sit down and grab content up, and spit it out there as a private channel. If I put it on my website on the private channel section, it would be the Tech for Luddites private channel.

Elizabeth

Exactly. It's very cool that they have that. There's nothing else, though, that you're hearing about if they do announce a new version, there's no other big feature that you're hearing about that might make the cut?

Ryan

I'm going to ... I want to do some writing on it. I'm going to do some brainstorming, myself, because ... I had to laugh one time: I wrote an article about Roku almost a year ago, and it was saying maybe there's going to be a Roku 4, right?

Elizabeth

Right.

Ryan

I put it out there, and then people ... For some reason, nobody else was writing about it at the time ... About a month later, I started seeing a number of websites reporting that there are people saying that a Roku 4 could be on the way with these features. No joke, it was the stuff that I had said. I said, "Oh my god, I am Other People!"

Elizabeth

Yeah, you're the "they", the inside source that they refer to.

Ryan

I know, but then nobody would talk to me.

Elizabeth

A source who refused to be named.

Ryan

That's one of the dangers with, especially tech reporting, is there's too many possible sources, or people who are close to the project, and I notice a lot of that stuff turned out to be bollocks.

Elizabeth

You were ... I mean, infamously maybe, you were actually doubting, or you weren't convinced that the Apple announcement was even going to include a new Apple TV, because they have such a history of hyping up things that never come to pass.

Ryan

Yeah, yeah. They've been calling for a new Apple TV for three years ... Not Apple, of course, but the rumors: "Oh, there's going to be a television set. It's going to be ... There's going to be this," and then this summer, "Oh, this summer announcement, it's going to include the new Apple TV, and a streaming service. Well, never mind, but in the fall they're going to announce is true. Maybe never mind, but, yeah ..." Everybody wants to be first. People don't care about accuracy, they care about being first, and I think that that's a problem.

Elizabeth

Yeah, especially in this ... In the consumer electronics arena, where there are a lot of changes all the time. There's always something new being introduced, but if it's ... They get people so worked up about what to expect, and then it's this huge disappointment when they actually make the announcement.

Ryan

They set whoever it is up for failure. "I thought it was going to have 3-D without glasses." It's like, "Well, we never said that that was going to exist. Some guy made it up and put it out there." I would hate it if I were one of these companies. The expectations for the Apple TV was going to be like, "This is going to be the most monumental device that's ever come out," and then they released what looks like a good device, and people were bashing it because it doesn't have all of the made up features that people have been rumoring for two years.

Elizabeth

Exactly. Now that we've kind of looked at all four of them, and what we know for sure is happening, and what we think might be happening, how do you sort of see the ... Just limiting to these Big Four, basically, the market shaking up? Obviously, there's going to be a big push around the holidays with all of these, so what are your thoughts on what's going to make it, what's ... Is it going to change who the leader is in the market now ... Who is the leader in the market now? It's Roku, right? Roku is ... Didn't they ...

Ryan

Roku ... there are more people buying Roku devices at the moment.

Elizabeth

They knocked out the Apple TV, though.

Ryan

Fire TV is the fastest-growing.

Elizabeth

Which one is?

Ryan

Fire TV is the fastest-growing.

Elizabeth

Right.

Ryan

Right now, Roku has become the household name, as far as this goes: the Kleenex, or Vaseline.

Elizabeth

Because they don't have anything else. Not ... They don't have other product lines that they're trying to brand as Roku, so that's good for them.

Ryan

Yeah, and they're being really smart in the way that they're licensing. They're working with TV manufacturers in putting their operating system on televisions, things like that, so people could get that confused and say, "Roku makes TVs". Roku doesn't make TVs, they don't make TVs any more than any other smart TV platform does.

Elizabeth

It's really just like having a built-in Roku in the TV, as opposed to having a separate unit.

Ryan

Yeah, the companies like TCL say, "Hey, we want to have a Roku version of our TV, along with an Android TV version of our TV." But Roku right now is the hottest, the leader, the established leader, while Fire TV is the hot product, especially the Fire TV stick, and Apple has always been there. Apple's got ... I think there's more people with Apple TV units, even the old ones, than any other product. It just isn't selling as much because it's been out for a long time. I think that it, even it kind of peaked.

Elizabeth

It was one of the first ones that had as much ... When it was launched, it actually was like, "Wow, look at all these channels you can get; all these apps you can get." Then, because they didn't do anything more with it for a long time, it was like, "Wow, is that all the apps that you get?" It's kind of funny how the exact same device ... It kind of went from hero to zero in a couple years.

Ryan

I think that Apple will get a big push in the next ... It'll be ... With everything, with two new products going at the same time, basically, I think the interesting thing to look at, the how much money does Amazon make by getting people to get Prime. That's their whole thing; that's why they make it so cheap.

Elizabeth

It's to sell you content.

Ryan

Their \$50 Kindles. They want you to go out and buy that Kindle and then say, "You know what? Instead of going to Best Buy and all that traffic on Black Friday, I'm just going to sit here with my brand-new Kindle and my one year of Prime, and I'm going to do all my shopping with this."

Elizabeth

Yeah, exactly. It's a totally different model, but it's really very successful for them.

Ryan

It's sneaky. Amazon's like the ninja of this world, because you don't ... The competition did not see them coming. Walmart and all these places had their Amazon Fire stuff, with the Fire tablets loaded up one year, and now people are using ... People are walking into Walmart with their Fire to go on, "Hey, will you match this price?" It's cheaper on Amazon.

Elizabeth

One thing I found really interesting was the new Apple TV, that was for two weeks before it was actually announced, there was a ton of press about it because they knew about the event, this was what everybody was hoping they would announce in the Apple TV, and they had indications that they might ... There was a lot of sort of pre-launch hoopla. The Amazon TV, which was paired with the Kindle Fire upgrades, that just seemed to happen. I think it was last Thursday or last Friday, whatever day that they announced it, I had heard nothing in advance ... other than, the sort of speculation that because the Fire TV box wasn't available on the store, people were speculating, but it didn't have that same level of hoopla in advance. It was just like, "Okay, so Apple announced this. Look. A week later, we've got this, and we've got 4K, ha-ha-ha."

Ryan

If you ask me, I think that they were always planning on doing 4K, and had maybe a little prior knowledge that Apple wasn't ...

Elizabeth

So they held off.

Ryan

Yeah, they held off instead of releasing first, because, obviously, it's not like they went out and made a new Fire TV a week after the Apple TV was announced. They had this all this time, and, yeah, I think the big thing is that Amazon just doesn't hold as many of those big events. I'm trying to remember the last one that they did, where there was really announcements, and Jeff Bezos showing things off.

Elizabeth

The Fire phone. The Fire phone. Maybe that's why they don't do them any more.

Ryan

I think that the Fire TV is probably going to be the hottest seller, but Apple TV might have a real shot, because it's going to be the first time in a long time that they've released something, and they're ... Apple has finally ... They've put the Apple TV on their website, finally. It was always there, but it was never found in the same categories where I think, like, the iPod was, or the Mac computers. You always had to just search for it, and now it's right at the top of the screen, Apple TV.

Elizabeth

Right.

Ryan

They're obviously planning to make a big push. I can't wait to see, kind of analyze the way they advertise it in the commercials, because, yeah, when people come in that ... If I'm an Apple store employee, everybody who comes in to buy a new iPhone or something like that, I'd want to say, "Hey, you like sports? Did you know you can get ESPN 3 through the Apple TV?" Just things like that, just push, push, push. I think that they can move some units since people are used to overpaying at Apple.

Elizabeth

Then it's the ... Like you said, the whole fanboy thing, so they're not going to have trouble selling them, for sure.

So I've actually taken up more of your time than I said I would, but I do want to close out with one final thought from you, which is, when people who have not done any streaming, or are new to the whole idea of it or just getting into it, sometimes they'll ask me, well, "I can't read all this information, it's too much, what would you say is the best solution?", this is *my* answer: Go with the Apple TV if you're already embedded in the Apple ecosystem. If you're all iPhone, iPad, all the time, go with Apple TV. If you're not, then go with the Fire TV stick, because, exactly what we talked about before: this incredible value for the money, very good general purpose, at a very good, entry-level price, and then you can sort of see how it works, and if you want to later, pick up something else, then do that.

Roku is if they've got ... I would say the Roku over the Fire TV stick if there are specific types of content, niche specialty content that you really like. You'd probably have a better chance of finding it on Roku, and if that's the case then that extra \$60 isn't going to be a major turnoff if you're getting the content that's important to you.

Then, I would say Chromecast, the only reason I would ever recommend Chromecast would be if there's a specific app that they support that none of the other ones do, which is, probably is the case, because there are a number of apps that I'm ... There's tons of apps that I have no idea what they are, and because it's so low-priced, but if you were going for general purpose, I would always choose the Fire TV stick over a Chromecast for what we discussed before. That's my rationale. What would you advise to people who have never used streaming devices? How would you ... What would be different from what I said? Would it be different from what I said, from your point of view?

Ryan

What I would say is, for someone who's new to streaming, they're probably not heavily invested in any ecosystem, so I would jump right from the intro level thing, would definitely would be a Roku. I always recommend the Roku 3 because it's just faster and stronger, but if somebody was like, "I want to get into this cheap," I would say get a Roku 3, or a Roku streaming stick, and then you could sort of get used to the idea of streaming services. The only reason I would disagree about the Fire TV stick is, like you

said, it is fantastic, I love it. If you're not already invested with it, if you don't have Amazon Prime, the whole menu ... Have you ever turned on a streaming stick, or the Fire TV without signing into Prime?

Elizabeth

That's a good point.

Ryan

It looks very barren. And it can be confusing to someone who is new to it. They'd be like, "Wait a second, what do I have to do to get this?"

Elizabeth

It's true. One thing that they don't do well is ... For example, Netflix is already pre-installed on all the other devices. You still have to sign in and authenticate yourself, but on the Fire TV, both the box and the stick, first you have to download the app and install it. Which is, again, for people who aren't technically inclined, or are already sort of confused about what's going on, that's the extra step that I don't know why they make them do that, when obviously most people are going to want at least one ... Again, obviously, the Amazon Video is tightly integrated, which makes sense. I see what you're saying with the Roku ... What's that?

Ryan

Yeah. Amazon wants you to get their thing, but, like I said, while Roku doesn't have a Roku media movie show... It's just, to me, Roku is just the easiest thing to jump into, because you can ... It's got that whole channel store. I think their channel store is better than anything out there; it's just more intuitive, it's better categorized, so, yes, I think Roku is the best intro. That said, the Chromecast, I would say, would be something more for people who are already streaming, who have smart devices, and, like I said, it makes a great alternative thing, it makes a great study player. You put on Pandora with your Chromecast, you're listening to it on your, through your TV while you're doing something else, it's a good dorm room sort of thing, that kind of thing, but ... Then, what I'm curious ...

What I really want to see about Apple TV is how well it stands on its own, because people always say if you got it integrated it's just got a lot of Apple stuff. But if somebody does like Apple products, the Apple TV is a huge winner because of Air Play, like you said.

Elizabeth

Air Play is fabulous.

Ryan

Anybody who has an iPhone and an iPad, I say that you ought to see Air Play. I show them, and they often buy Apple TV after that because it's such a cool feature. I think that the new Apple TV is going to

be kind of amazing, as it grows. I think we haven't seen even much of its potential, but I think, especially if they release that service that's been rumored for a while ...

Elizabeth

I know, that's going to be ... That's a big question mark, still. Maybe we'll do a separate show on that, in the future.

Ryan

Whenever it comes out, I'd be glad to do it. What I think of when I think of Apple TV, whether they have that service is, did you notice that when the market reacted when Apple was the exclusive home of HBO Now that the Apple TV went crazy, number 12 or 13 on Amazon to number 3.

Elizabeth

Of course, now you get HBO Now on all of them, so that benefit has dissipated.

Ryan

Yeah. Now they've got their new model coming out, but that made an old product that had been considered, I mean, you know ... Every article was like, "The stupid old Apple TV, which isn't even worth buying any more," all of a sudden became a hot item on Amazon. You don't see ... Show me another product that's been around for three years that all of a sudden went into the top three.

Elizabeth

That's a good point.

Ryan

What I think they'll do is they'll get as much mileage out of releasing the new model as they can, and then when they make the big announcement, which, I think it's coming. I just think that people are trying to jump the gun a bit. I think that this is a long process to work out.

Elizabeth

I think they found that it's a lot harder to negotiate with, because they have to negotiate with so many different players, from networks, to local TV stations, to content producers, so the whole thing, it's very complex, which is why the whole cutting the cord thing is so hard to explain to people. And you can't answer the question easily, "Can I cut the cord?" because it depends on what it is you want to watch on TV, and it's such a complex mess.

Anyway, I really, really appreciate you talking to me, Ryan. You raised a lot of things that I hadn't either thought about, or I didn't understand the implications of, and I think it's going to be really useful for my listeners to try and make sense. Because, again, we're all going to be hit with all of these as the holidays are coming up, and so hopefully this will give people more insight into what they should be

looking for and what value it will bring to them, and so I really want to thank you ... Great, I have a plane going overhead. That's always nice when you're doing an audio recording.

I want to say, I really want to thank you for taking the time to go over all this with me, and I'm sure I'm going to be inviting you back again in the future, because you've got great insights that I know my readers will find really ... My listeners and my readers will find really interesting. I will be, of course, linking to your site in the show notes with some of the different places that we've specifically discussed in this recording, but I just want to say thank you so much for being my ... Not only my first guest, but my best guest.

Ryan

I'm glad I could do it. You've got a great site, you do good work. It was one of the first things that I ran across that I really liked when I was, when I first started researching the market of who was out there writing, and I appreciate your approach, and I'm not surprised to see how successful it's going to be. I think it's going to ... You do a great job with what you do.

Elizabeth

Thank you. I'm actually ...

Ryan

I'm just really honored to be on your podcast.

Elizabeth

Thank you. I'm actually planning to be updating all my posts, partly because all these new products are coming out, but also just to ... You know, now that I've seen the type of questions people ask, I can reorganize them a little bit, but ... Great. I will just sign off, now. Again, it's been a great discussion, and I look forward to hearing more from you, and I'm sure my listeners will love to go to your site and get all sorts of ... thestreamingadviser.com ... To get even more in-depth information on all these different options that are coming out.

And that's it for this episode of The Luddite Lounge. Again, you can find show notes with related links at ludditelounge.com/episode4.

Thanks for listening! Until next time...