

The Luddite Lounge

Episode 14 Transcript, 06/14/16

<http://ludditelounge.com/episode14>

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 14 of The Lounge and today's episode is an I Stream, You Stream segment, where I'll be talking about streaming media players and content. You can find show notes with related links at ludditelounge.com/episode14.

Let's get started!

In a recent Tech for Luddites monthly newsletter, I mentioned that I'm going to have to start adding a regular section about streaming media because there's so much happening in this space and it's all happening so quickly. And since even a month can be a long time to go between updates, I'm going to try to do an I Stream, You Stream episode of the Lounge once a month as well, about halfway between newsletters.

For today's episode, let's start with the players.

First up, a Deal Alert on the Amazon Fire TV. As a Father's Day promotion, the [three box versions of the player](#) – the box alone, the gaming edition, and the box and TV antenna bundle – are currently on sale for \$15 off their normal prices.

Also, all the Fire TV models, including the stick and the first generation devices have recently received a new software update with a bunch of enhancements including some new parental controls, live streaming for Showtime and Starz programming if you've subscribed to them through your Amazon Prime membership, new Alexa capabilities like finding out local business information, and support for YouTube's 4K content. You can find a [link for more information](#) about this update in the show notes.

And then there's this: For the month of June, Tech for Luddites is running a contest where readers can submit their favorite tech tip. At the end of the month, I'll do a drawing from all the submissions and the winner will receive an Amazon Fire TV Stick with Voice Remote AND an Amazon Fire Tablet. I haven't gotten many tips yet, so if you participate, your odds are a lot better than in most contests. So come [share your favorite tip](#) and enter for a chance to win!

Next up, a Deal Alert on the Roku Streaming Stick! Back in April Roku introduced a [new version of its streaming stick](#) with a list price of \$59.99. And speaking of things changing quickly, when it was released the list price was \$59.99 but they've already reduced it to \$49.99, which makes it the same

price as the Amazon Fire TV Stick with Voice Remote. Even better, for a Father's Day promotion they've taken another \$10 off! (Boy, fathers are really going to do well this year, aren't they?!)

The new stick is significantly more powerful than the previous version. It also adds a much-requested new feature, which is the ability to use headphones to listen to the content streaming through it. However, unlike with the Roku 4 and 3 box models, there's no headphones jack on the remote that comes with the stick. Instead, you need to download the Roku app to your mobile device and use the headphones with it.

On to the Apple TV. Yesterday was the kickoff Apple's annual Worldwide Developers' Conference—or WWDC as they call it—where the company shares all sorts of updates about their entire product line. There wasn't a ton of news about the Apple TV, but there were a couple of good things worth sharing. They finally have a mobile app that you can use as a remote for your Apple TV. I say "finally" because Amazon Fire TV and Roku have had these for ages and also because the Apple TV's physical remote isn't its best asset, if I do say so myself. Unfortunately, I think the app is currently only available for iOS devices, but then again, I imagine most people who buy the Apple TV are predominantly iPhone and iPad users.

The other major announcement was that SlingTV, the Internet-only TV service, has finally come to the Apple TV. Again, it's been available for the other top players for a while now. [Bonus Deal Alert:](#) Sign up for three months of the service and you can get the 32GB model for just \$89, which is \$60 off the list price.

And finally, the Google Chromecast. A report just came out that for the first three months of this year, the [Chromecast sold almost double the number of Apple TVs](#) sold. Well, considering that the Chromecast is \$35 and the cheapest current-model Apple TV is \$149, I can't say that's a huge shocker.

I also have a tip I picked up during my recent two-month stay visiting my parents in Canada. I had brought all my streaming players with me to see how they would work outside the U.S. and as far as the hardware went, the Fire TV, Roku, and Apple TV were fine. However, while trying to set up my Chromecast I got an error message that because it was made for a U.S. market, it might not be able to connect to my Internet provider. And sure enough, it didn't. So I ended up buying a new Chromecast at a Canadian store and I had no problems setting that up at all. I'm not technical enough to understand what the issue was but just be aware if you're traveling to another country, your current Chromecast may not work for you.

Okay, on to streaming content!

I mentioned earlier that with the Apple TV support, you can now watch [Sling TV](#) through all of the Big Four streaming players. That's not the only news for this service, though. The company is now offering two different packages you can subscribe to, both for \$20/month. The first, original package, includes ESPN and Disney channels and also lets you purchase a number of add-on bundles for an extra \$5/month. The second package, described as in Beta, doesn't give you ESPN or Disney, but does give you Fox channels and some regional sports coverage, which aren't available with the original. It also lets

you stream to up to three devices at a time, unlike the first package, which is limited to a single device. The other downside to the new one is that you can't purchase those extra bundles. Yep, it's confusing.

Last October, Google announced a new YouTube service called [YouTube Red](#). For \$10/month, you get ad-free videos, downloading capabilities, audio and video that would continue playing in the background while you use other apps or when you turn off the screen, and a free subscription to Google Play Music. It also includes exclusive content from some of their top YouTube stars. I guess it hasn't really taken off yet, so they've added a little incentive. You can now subscribe to YouTube Red for just 99 cents for three months to try it out and then the price will go back up to \$10/month. Unfortunately, I just discovered this deal today and the offer expires on June 17th, so if you're interested in giving it a try, check it out now!

Finally, my current streaming recommendation is [The Americans from the FX Network](#).

The show stars Keri Russell and Matthew Rhys as two KGB agents in the 1970s and 80s who are living in the United States as typical suburban parents of two children. Oh, and they happen to have an FBI agent living across the street. The show just wrapped up its fourth season (there are only 13 episodes per season, so it doesn't take that long to binge-watch) and it's just gotten better over time. Especially Keri Russell, whose performance I found a bit stiff in the early episodes but who has really come into the role. (Matthew Rhys has been outstanding throughout.) The series is definitely for adults only, with lots of violence – some of it pretty gruesome, but it's really the relationships and the morality questions that make the show so compelling.

You can watch the series through the [FX Now app](#), which is available on all of the Big Four players. However, you do need to log in through a cable or satellite provider to prove that you currently have the network in your subscription.

If, like me, you don't have it in your package (or you don't have cable at my all), I discovered that if you go to [fxnetworks.com](#) in a desktop browser, you can get a 1-hour preview pass. The pass isn't available to watch on a mobile device or through the FX app on your streaming devices, but if you have a way to mirror content from your computer to your TV, then you can still watch it there. I did it by using the Chrome browser and mirroring it to my Chromecast, but there are other mirroring options available that I've written about. The [link to the post](#) is in the show notes.

You can take advantage of the preview pass multiple times, but I'm not sure how long you have to wait between sessions. Also note that if you pause the video, the countdown clock on that 1 hour continues to run, so make sure you have a full hour to watch the episode when you start it.

If you don't have a way to mirror your computer screen but still want to watch it on TV, the show is available to purchase through [Amazon Video](#), with the first three seasons currently available through their free catalog for [Prime members](#).

And that's it for this episode of The Luddite Lounge. Again, you can find the show notes at [ludditelounge.com/episode14](#).

Thanks for listening! Until next time...