

The Luddite Lounge – I Stream, You Stream

Episode 16 Notes, 10/06/16

www.ludditelounge.com/episode16

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 16 of The Lounge and today's episode is an I Stream, You Stream segment, where I'll be talking about streaming media devices and content. You can find show notes with related links at ludditelounge.com/episode16.

Let's get started!

First off, starting next week, Tech for Luddites is going to be sending out a monthly newsletter devoted specifically to streaming media-related topics. It will go out mid-month, halfway between the general newsletters that go out at the end of the month. If you'd like to receive the new newsletter, go to techforluddites.com/subscribe and you can sign up there. Note that if you already receive mailings from T4L, the workflow for subscribing to another one is kind of convoluted. One of my goals for 2017 is to fix that. In the meantime, if you have an existing email from Tech for Luddites, you can scroll to the bottom and click on Update Subscription Preferences and check off the Streaming Media Newsletter option.

Next up, Amazon, Roku, and Google have all announced new models of their streaming media players in the last couple of weeks. You can get more details about these updates at <http://techforluddites.com/streamingupdates2016>.

Amazon has upgraded its Fire TV Stick with better performance and connectivity specs for a list price of \$39.99. The second-generation model only has one remote option now, but the good news is you're now getting the voice remote version for the same price as the non-voice version of the first generation streamer. Woo-hoo!

Another nice bonus: If you order and activate your new Fire TV Stick before the end of October, you'll get a \$10 credit for Amazon Video content. Also, if you've never subscribed to Sling TV or Hulu before, you can get a credit for a longer trial period than normal to those services. All in all, this bonus could add up to \$65 in savings for you. Double woo-hoo! You can find more information about the Fire TV Stick at <http://techforluddites.com/firetv>.

In Roku news, they've come out with an entirely new line of streaming boxes. There are five of them, ranging from \$29.99 to \$129.99, with differences in video format support, performance,

connectivity options, and other features. One thing I don't like about the new lineup is that they've taken away the screen mirroring feature from all the models. Fortunately, the Roku Streaming Stick that was released earlier this year still has that option. You can get more details about the differences between all the models at <http://techforluddites.com/roku>.

Google had a big product event this week and one of the things they rolled out was a new, higher-end Chromecast, called Chromecast Ultra. It supports 4K video and comes with an Ethernet adapter and is priced at \$69, about twice the cost of the standard Chromecast, which is still available. You can find more information about the Chromecast at – you guessed it – <http://techforluddites.com/chromecast>.

As for the Apple TV, there's been no indication that any updates are coming in the near future. The biggest news I've seen is that they've now stopped selling the older version altogether. So if you want one, you'll have to get the fourth-generation version that they released in 2015.

<http://arstechnica.com/apple/2016/10/apple-quietly-discontinues-the-69-third-gen-apple-tv/>

In addition to the streaming media players for TVs, I'm now going to start talking about streaming audio devices as part of T4L's various streaming media-related information sharing.

Two years ago, Amazon released their Echo speaker that had additional capabilities thanks to Amazon's cloud-based Alexa voice assistant. Like most new technologies, it started out as more of a curiosity, but in 2015, it started to gain more buzz and this year I think it's really about to hit the mainstream.

For one thing, last spring Amazon introduced two new variations of the Echo: The Echo Dot, which lets you add Alexa intelligence to any speaker you own and the Amazon Tap, which has a rechargeable battery so it's more portable, but needs you to press a button on it to wake it up. These products have been good sellers for Amazon. In fact, the Echo Dot did so well, they've already introduced a second generation of it this year with a better processor at a lower price (\$50 instead of \$90). They've even got a Buy 5, Get 1 Free deal!

For another thing, the Echo got some amazing product placement this year in the second season of Mr. Robot, where one of the characters was shown frequently chatting with Alexa.

But I think what's really going to make these things take off is that Google has now gotten into the game. At their event this week, they introduced the Google Home speaker, which works with its own voice assistant. It also lets you control your Chromecast by voice, so I'm looking forward to checking that out. The list price for the Google Home is \$129. It's available for pre-order right now and will start shipping in early November.

<https://www.engadget.com/2016/10/04/ai-powered-voice-assistant-google-home-costs-129/>

In other words, expect to see these products on a lot of holiday wishlists this year!

You can learn more about the Echo, Echo Dot, and Amazon Tap at <http://techforluddites.com/echo>. I also just created a new video comparing the Echo and the Tap, which you can see on the T4L channel at <http://youtube.com/techforluddites>. And I'll soon be writing some posts about the Google Home so stay tuned for that.

As you can see, there have been a ton of updates about the various streaming devices lately, but not so much about streaming content providers. So for this episode of the Lounge, I'll just end with my current streaming recommendation, which is Jessica Jones from Netflix.

<https://www.netflix.com/title/80002311>

Jessica Jones is a character from the Marvel Universe. I'm not a big comic book person myself, but I enjoyed the first season of this rather dark show. Jessica is played by Krysten Ritter, who you may recognize from recurring roles in shows like Veronica Mars, Gilmore Girls, and Breaking Bad. Jessica isn't your typical superhero with a fancy superhero name and even fancier superhero costume. She's more like a highly damaged person who just happens to have some super strength to deal with the villains in her life. The worst of these is played by former Dr. Who, David Tennant, with supreme creepiness as mind-controlling Kilgrave. The show contains a fair bit of graphic gore and violence so be forewarned. But if you're fine with that and get all the way through the series and are disappointed to find the second season is probably at least a year away, you can then move on to Luke Cage, who is also a recurring figure in Jessica Jones.

<https://www.netflix.com/title/80002537>

You can watch the series through the Netflix app, which is available on all of the Big Four players. If you're not already a Netflix subscriber, they have a one-month free trial, plenty of time to binge watch both series!

And that's it for this episode of The Luddite Lounge. Again, you can find the show notes at ludditelounge.com/episode16 and don't forget to sign up for the Streaming Media newsletter at techforluddites.com/subscribe.

Thanks for listening! Until next time...