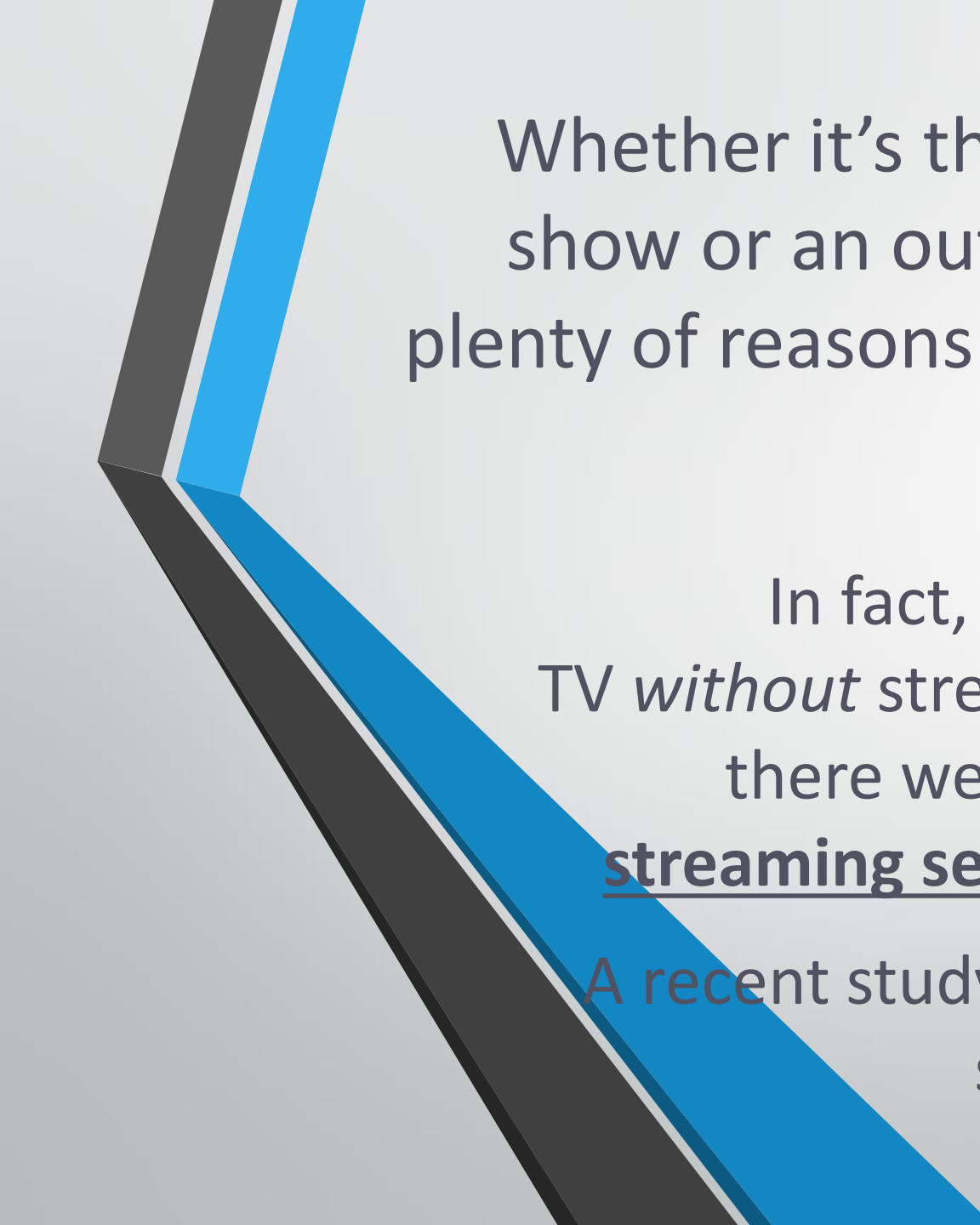


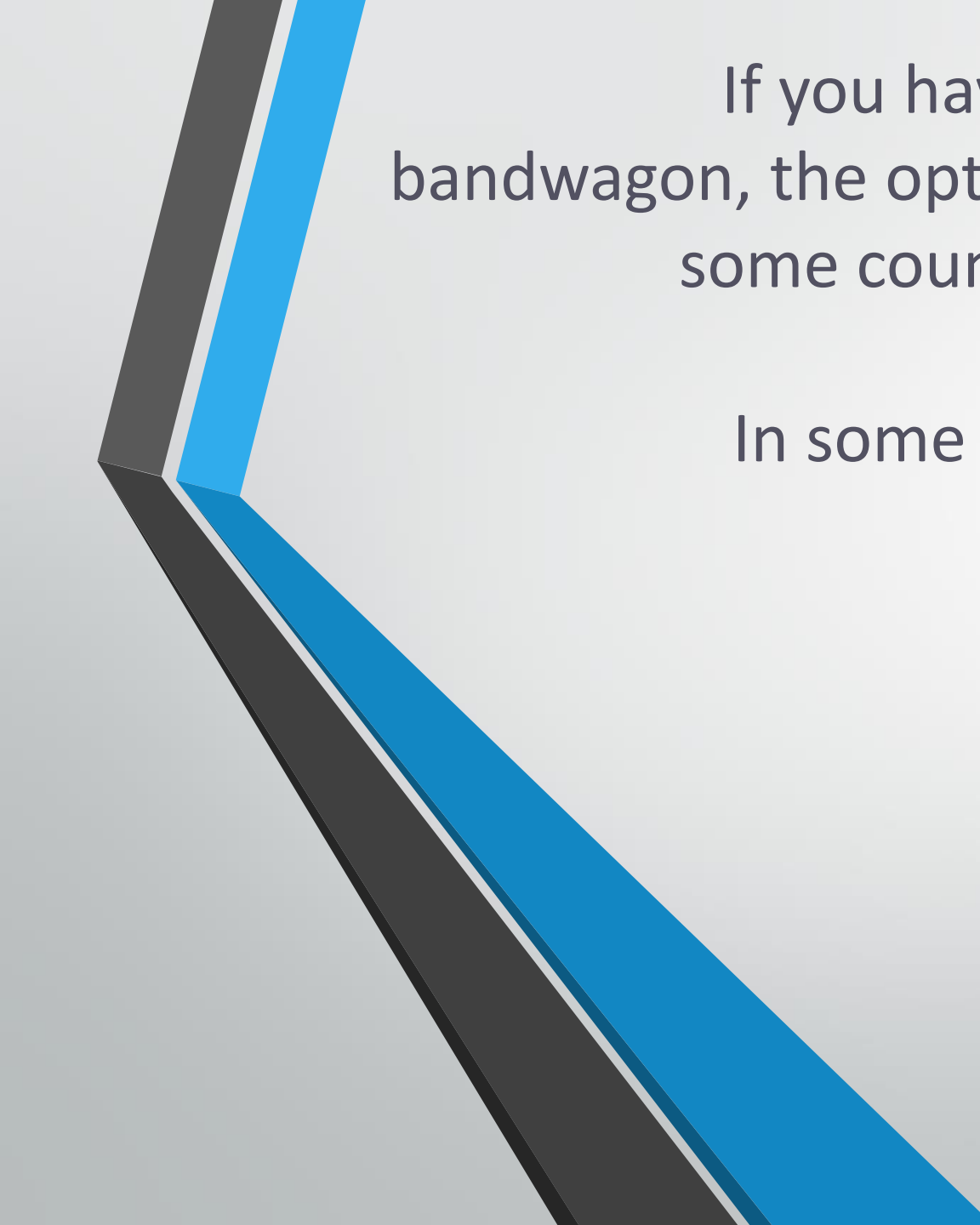
All you need to know about streaming TV — A beginner's guide



Whether it's the latest season of your favorite show or an out-of-control cable bill, there are plenty of reasons to add some [streaming](#) to your TV diet.

In fact, it's getting harder and harder to watch TV *without* streaming. 2018 marked the first year that there were more scripted original TV shows on streaming services than broadcast and basic cable.

A recent study found that more U.S. consumers now subscribe to a streaming service than a traditional [pay-TV subscription.](#)

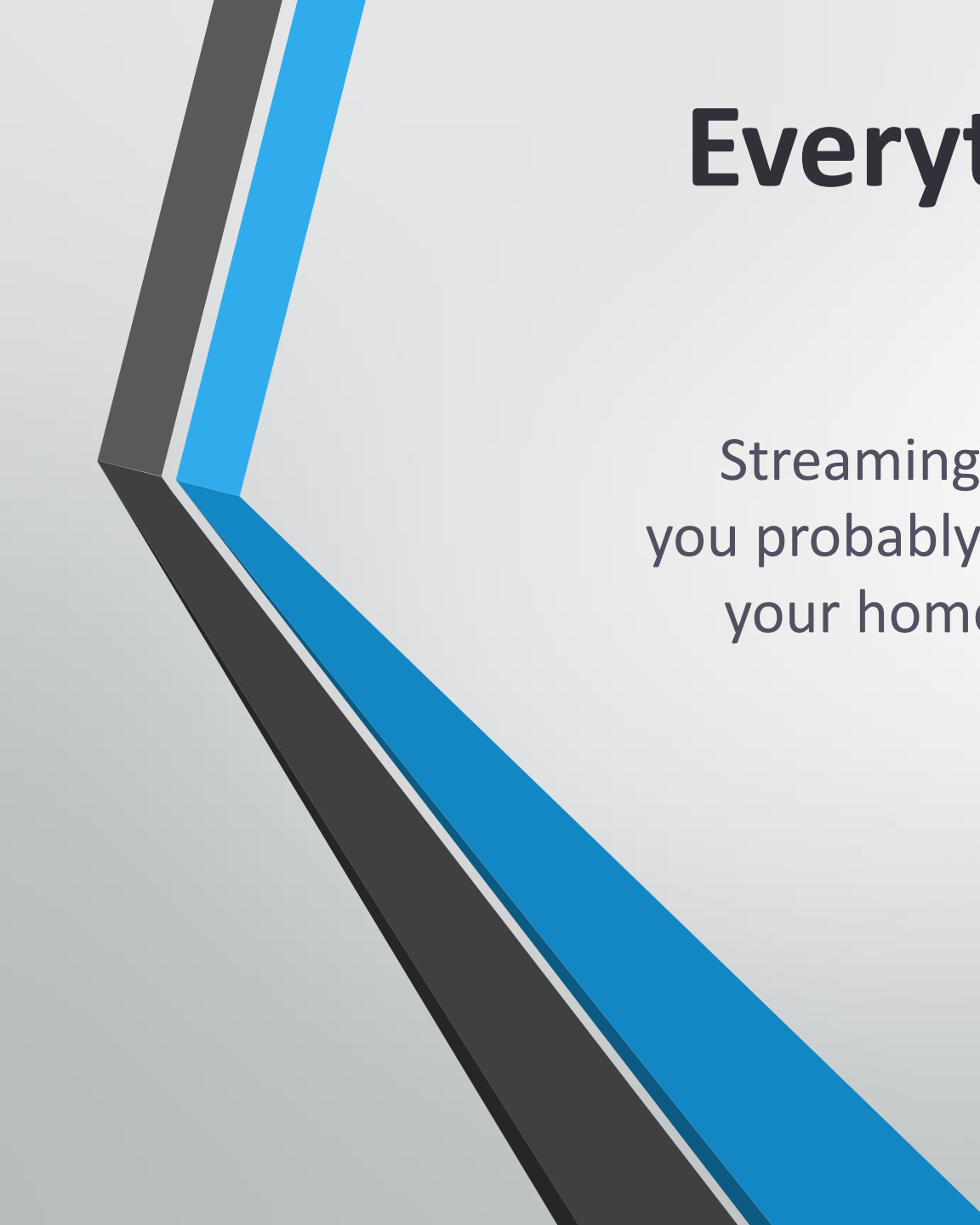


If you haven't already hopped on the streaming bandwagon, the options can feel a little overwhelming. (By some counts, there are [more than 200 streaming services](#) to choose from in the U.S.)

In some cases, you may even be asking, what is streaming?


Is it worth it?

Here's what you need to know.



Everything you need to start streaming.

Streaming TV can seem like a complicated endeavor, you probably already have everything you need right in your home. Even if you don't, you shouldn't need to spend more than \$50 to get set up.



Everything you need to start streaming.

To set up **streaming** you need 3 things.

1. You need a reliable internet connection
2. A device to **stream** on.
3. Most importantly, something good to watch.

Fast internet

A happy streaming experience starts with your **internet connection**.

Here are some different **minimums** for various types of streaming:

- To stream videos in **standard definition (SD)**, at least 3 Mbps is recommended.
- To stream videos in **high definition (HD)**, at least 5 Mbps is recommended.
- To stream videos in **HDR or 4K**, at least 25 Mbps is recommended.

Not sure what type of streaming you'll be doing? There's a good chance it's HD.

Note!

Standard-definition resolution is a dinosaur. The last time a TV show [broadcast in SD was 2014](#), and most TVs started being manufactured in HD instead of SD around 2009 when the [FCC mandated](#) that all TV signals be transmitted digitally.

Today, SD TVs are no longer produced, and [Netflix](#) is the only major streaming service to even offer an SD plan — mostly as a way to promote its lower starting price.

4K TVs exist at the opposite end of the spectrum. They produce the best picture money can buy, and as such, they put a lot more stress on your internet connection.

Most TVs still fall into the HD category. You should aim for at least **5 Mbps of download speeds**, but that number will need to go up even higher if [more than one device is connected at a time](#).

Streaming device, smart TV or gaming console

Once you have a fast enough internet connection, you'll need a way to access streaming services on your TV. There are three common ways to do this:

1. Streaming devices like Roku and Amazon Fire TV cost around \$50 and plug into your **TV's HDMI port**. They give you access to every streaming service imaginable. **New and available streaming apps** are the main draw. Your smart TV might not have streaming for every major streaming service but your streaming device does. **They also provide an easy-to-navigate interface and the ability to search for titles across every streaming service.**

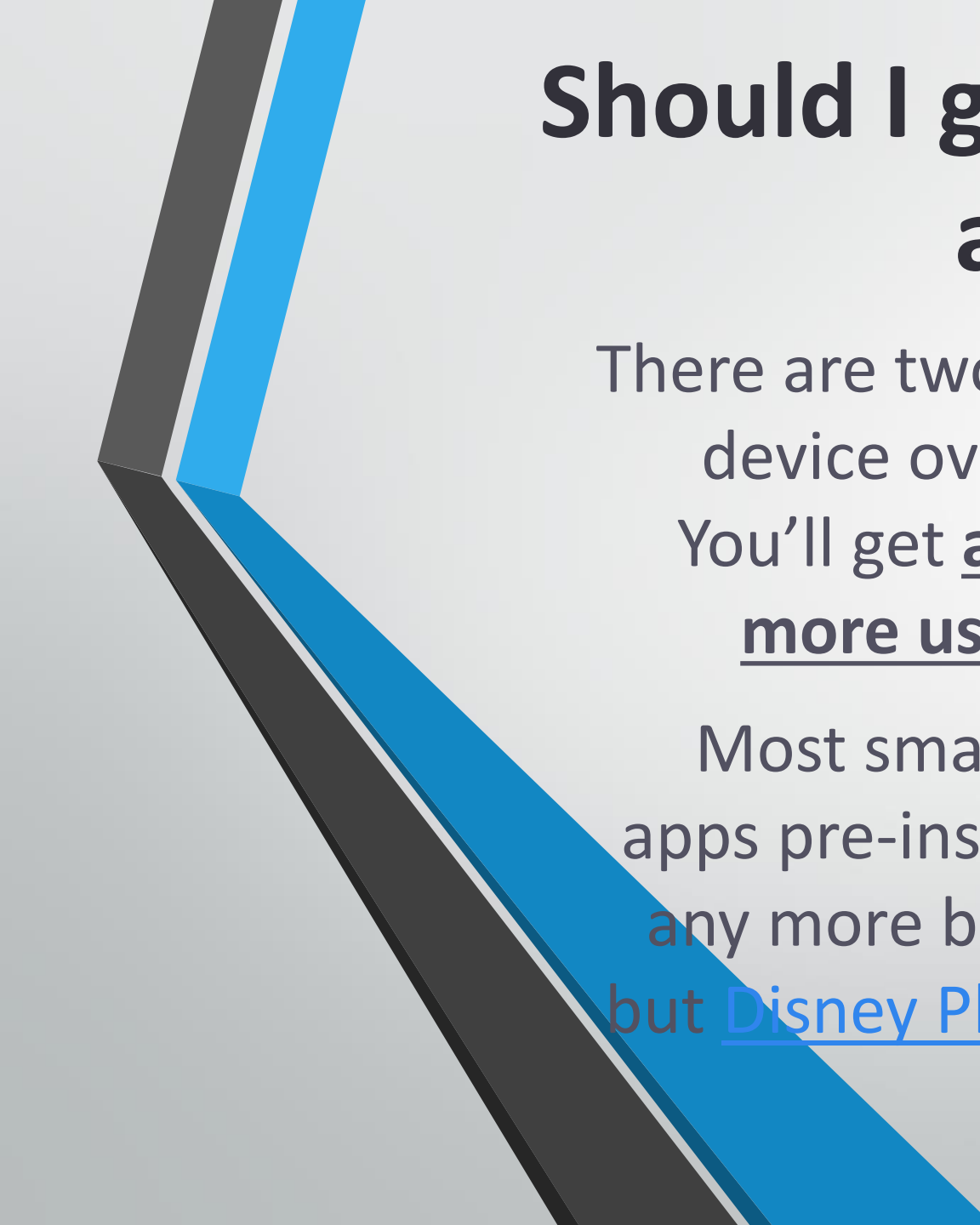
Streaming device, smart TV or gaming console - continued

2. Smart TVs are the most popular way to access streaming services, with 31% using this method. If you've bought a TV in the past 10 years, chances are it's considered "smart" — that is, it connects to the internet and has streaming apps built-in.

Unfortunately, it might not have every app you want and there's often no way to add new ones.

Streaming device, smart TV or gaming console - continued

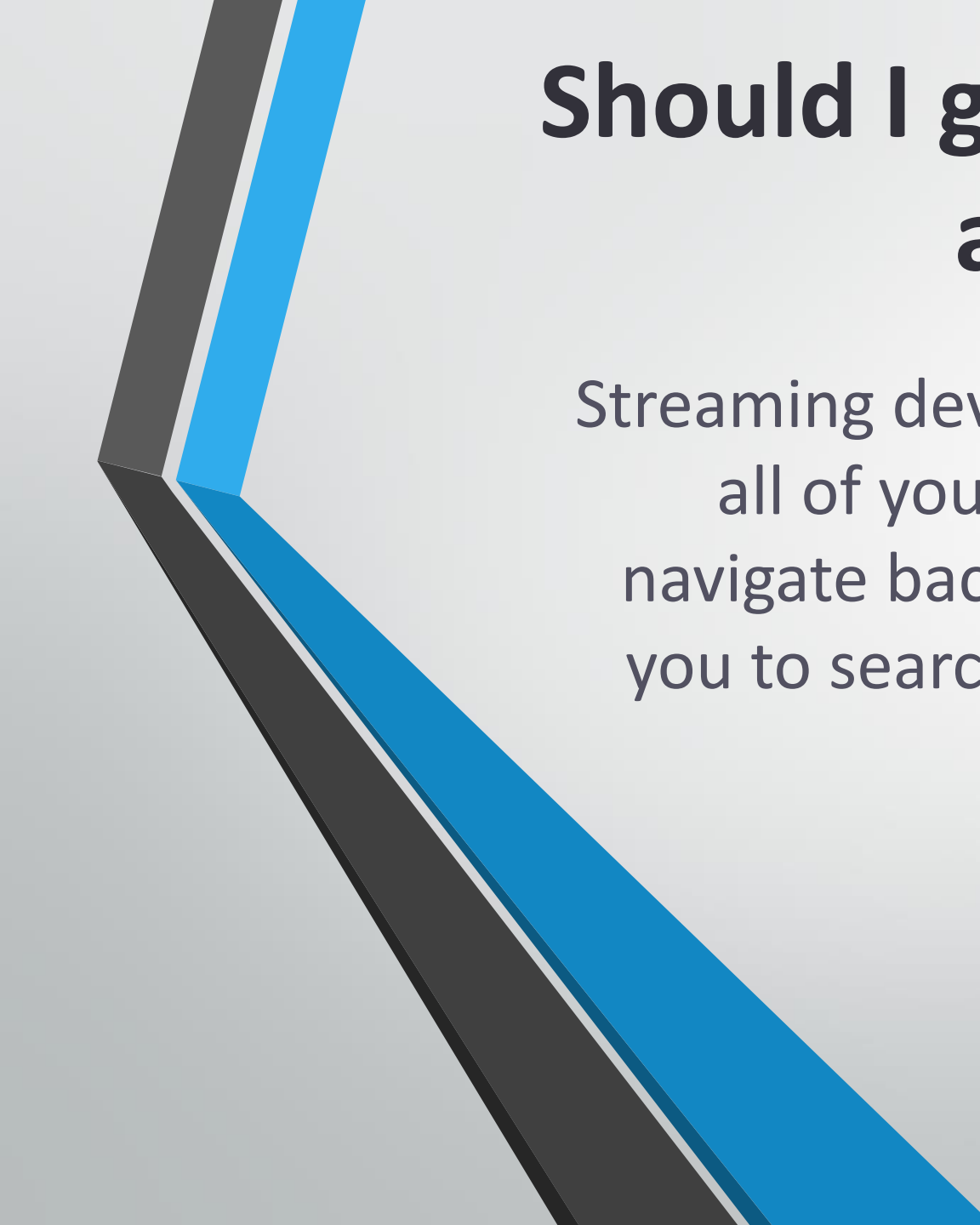
3. Gaming consoles are another popular method of streaming, but it's really a secondary use. If you don't already have one, it's not worth spending the \$300+ just to stream video.



Should I get a streaming device if I already have a smart TV?

There are two major advantages to using a streaming device over the built-in options on your smart TV: You'll get access to more streaming services and a more user-friendly interface and search system.

Most smart TVs come with a handful of streaming apps pre-installed, and you might not be able to add any more beyond that. If you want to watch *Mulan*, but Disney Plus isn't on your TV, you'd be out of luck.



Should I get a streaming device if I already have a smart TV?

Streaming devices also provide a better ecosystem for all of your streaming apps. They make it easier to navigate back and forth between services, and allow you to search for titles across every app available on the device..

You can still stream on an old TV without an HDMI port

If you have an older SD TV without HDMI ports, you can still stream with the right equipment. [Roku](#) is the only streaming device manufacturer that makes a device (the [Roku Express+](#)) that works with the red, yellow and white composite jacks found on older TVs.

Additionally, you can also purchase an HDMI to RCA adapter to convert your TV. There have been [complaints](#) about this not working very well with streaming services.



How to start streaming

1. Plug in your streaming device

If you are going to use a smart TV, you can skip down to step two.

Almost all streaming devices plug into your TV's HDMI port — and usually a power outlet as well. The first thing you'll need to do is plug the device in, switch your TV over to the HDMI input you're using and start following the instructions that appear on the screen.

How to start streaming

2. Connect to the internet

Once you've plugged in your streaming device, you'll need to sign into your home's Wi-Fi network. Some devices — like Amazon's Fire TV Stick 4K and Google's [Chromecast Ultra](#) — also have the ability to connect directly to your internet modem using an [Ethernet cable](#). This generally provides a more reliable connection, so you'll experience less buffering on your streams.

How to start streaming

3. Sign in to streaming apps

Popular streaming services like Netflix and [Hulu](#) will come pre-downloaded onto your smart TV or streaming device, but if you want to watch a more [niche service](#) like FUBO or CBS All Access, you'll probably have to download it yourself into your streaming device.



Find something to watch

When it comes to streaming TV, there are two main types of services available: live and on demand.

Live TV streaming services are like cable replacements. They air the same channels, have the same commercials and you pay a premium compared to other streaming services.

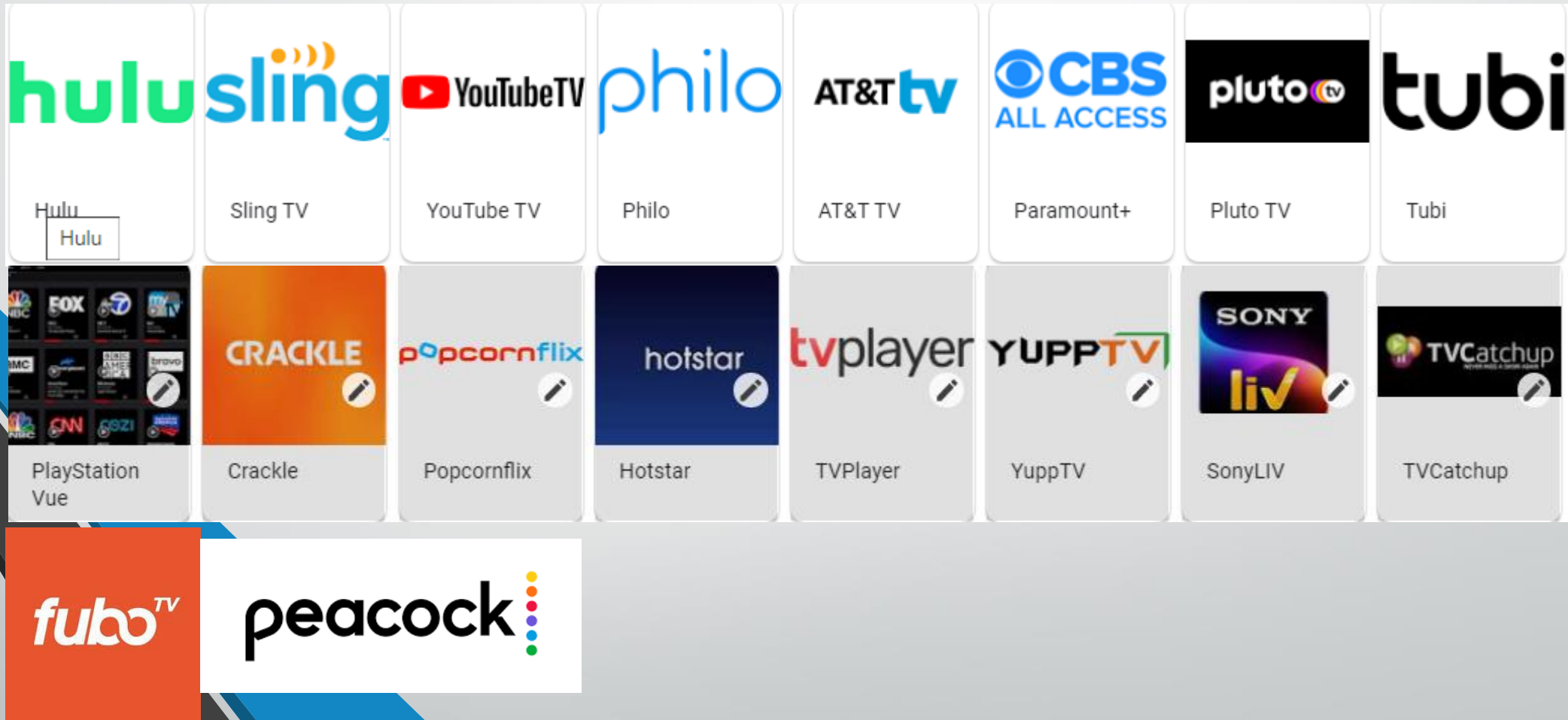
On-demand streaming services like Hulu and Netflix **don't** have live content — you can watch their shows and movies whenever you want.



On-demand streaming services

These are the most popular category of streaming services by far. Generally cost around \$10/mo., come with a seven-day free trial and give you access to thousands of TV shows and movies.

On-demand streaming services



On-demand streaming services

HULU	Up to 30-Day Free Trial	\$5.99/month
	65+ Live Channels (includes CBS, ESPN, ABC, FS1, FOX, NBCSN, Regional sports...)	
	Unlimited Access to Hulu Library (Over 75,000 Movies and TV Shows episodes)	
	50 hours of Cloud DVR storage + Extensive add-on Options Available	
Vidgo	Exclusive \$10/Month (for 2 Months)	\$10.00/month - \$40.00.month
	85+ Channels (includes ABC, FOX, ESPN, FS1, RedZone, Disney, Hallmark ...)	
	Latino Mas Packages with Lineup of the Top Spanish Channels	
	Watch with friends on up to 3 devices at once	

On-demand streaming services

PHILO	7-Day Free Trial	\$20.00/month
	63+ Live & On-Demand TV Channels (includes Hallmark, A&E, Discovery, AMC, HGTV, MTV, Comedy Central, Nick...)	
	Over 50,000 Movies & TV Series episodes on VOD Unlimited DVR & 72-Hour Rewind across Live Channels	
SLING	3-Day Free Trial	\$35.00/month \$45.00/month
	Get \$10 Off your First Month	
	Live TV Streaming & Access to Popular Cable Channels (Sports, News, Entertainment...)	
	Wide Range of Live Sports + Pay-per-view Entertainment Without Subscription	

On-demand streaming services

FUBO	7-Day Free Trial	\$64.99.month - \$79.99/month
	170+ channels of live TV (includes ABC, CBS, FOX, NBC, ESPN, Showtime, Regional Channels ...)	
	Great range of live sports coverage (includes NBA, UEFA Champions League, Premier League)	
	500 hours of cloud DVR storage	
CBS All Access	7-Day Free Trial	\$5.99.month
	Huge catalog of both classic and brand new CBS programming	
	Access to live NFL games and CBS news	
	Supported across multiple platforms	

On-demand streaming services

SHOWTIME	30-Day Free Trial	
	Watch full seasons and complete series, all commercial-free Stream Live TV + On-Demand, or Watch Offline	
	Log in on up to 5 Devices	\$10.99.month
PEACOCK	7-Day Free Trial	
	60 Live and On-demand TV Channels (includes NBC, Bravo, USA Network, SYFY, Oxygen, E!, CNBC ...)	
	Owned by NBCUniversal	\$4.99.month - \$9.99/month
	Intuitive, easy to use interfac	

On-demand streaming services

AT&T TV	7-Day Free Trial	
	Between 65 and 140 Channels of Live TV + 40k On-demand shows	
	Includes Major Sports channels + Local Channels. Record and Store up to 500 Hours	\$55.00.month - \$80.00/month
YouTube TV	Channels: 85+	
	Simultaneous streams: 3	
	DVR: Unlimited (9 mos.)	\$65.00.month

On-demand streaming services

Netflix (\$8.99 per month)

HBO Max (\$14.99 per month)

Disney Plus (\$6.99 per month)

Discovery + (4.99 w/Ads \$6.99 wo/Ads)

Amazon Prime Video (free w Yearly Amazon Prime Subscription \$118.00 or \$12.99/month)

On-demand streaming services

Streaming bundle	Price
Disney Plus + Hulu + ESPN+ bundle	\$13/mo.
Netflix + Hulu (with ads)	\$19/mo.
Netflix + Disney Plus	\$20/mo.
Netflix + Prime Video + Hulu (with ads)	\$28/mo.
Netflix + Prime Video + HBO Max	\$37/mo.

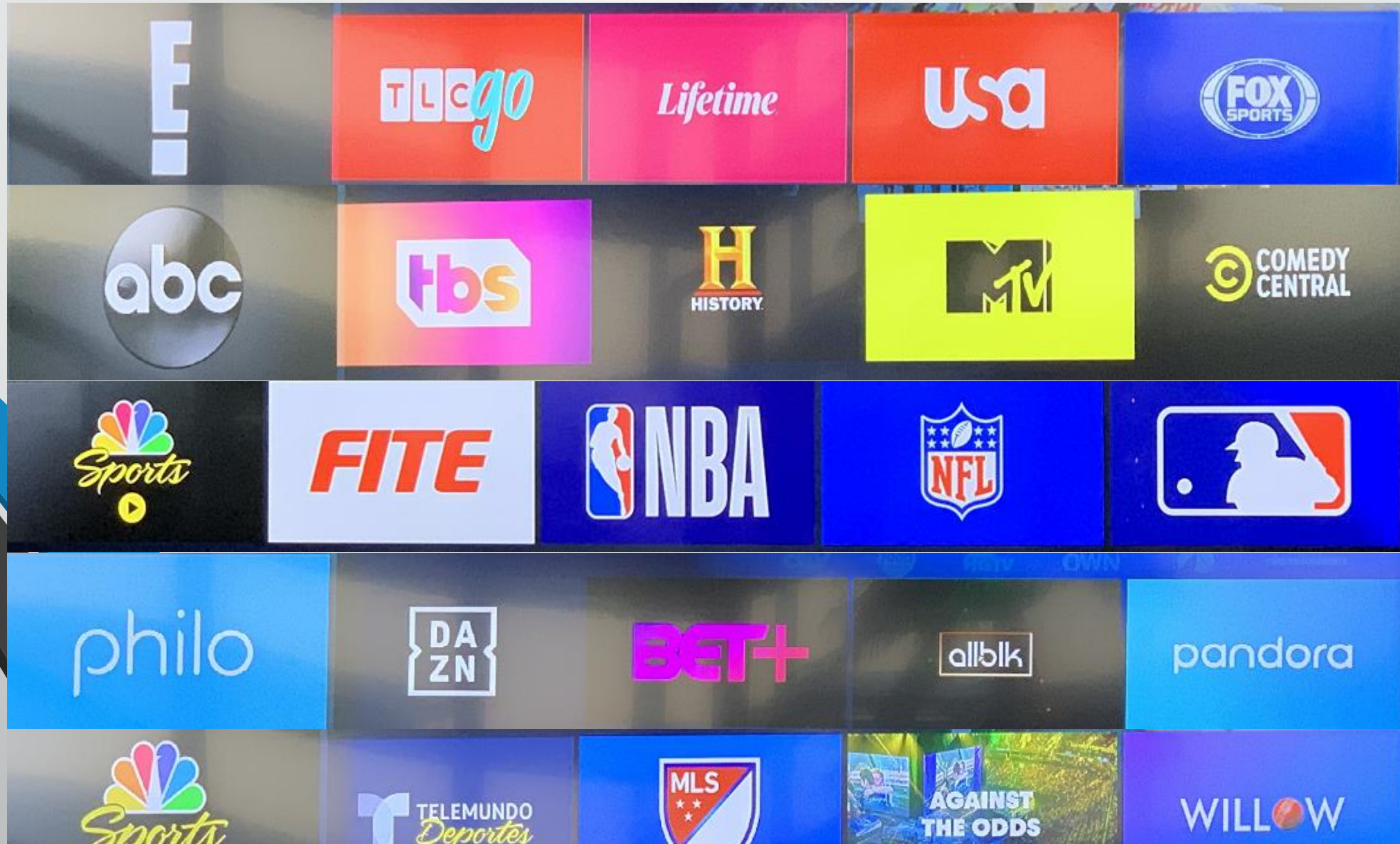
On-demand streaming services



On-demand streaming services



On-demand streaming services





Is Streaming right for you?

It solely depends on What you like to watch (live vs on Demand) and the number of services you need to fulfill your requirements