

Netflix: It's Eight Bucks, Deal With It

By David Mantey, Editor, [PD&D](#) [1]



For a bit more than the cost of a trade show cup of soup, Netflix will stream an infinite amount of content for you to mainline into your brain on a monthly basis.

The amount of content specified may be an exaggeration, but I challenge anyone to try and tear through the Netflix archive in one month. The 30-day, life-changing trial is huge these days. If you somehow manage to lose weight, you'll secure a book deal. Follow yourself with a Steadicam, cut together a rudimentary documentary, and you can sell the rights to Netflix.

Netflix is the easy target of the quarter since the company decided to spin its streaming and DVD-by-mail services into separate entities and tack on a 60 percent price hike — a \$4/month gouging that has every pop-culture free-baser up in arms.

While I do enjoy the trials and tribulations that follow [corporate PR disasters](#) [2], I find the fanned fury from this situation to be overkill.

Last week, a peer described the nightmare as a shotgun blast to the knee as the content company's misstep hastily escalated from a foot-shooting level and neared the femoral artery. I assume that an 80 percent price bump would have necessitated something closer to the groin.

I have streamed Netflix for more than a year via my Nintendo Wii, and it remains a good run. Commercial-free TV programming, a great documentary selection, and all the junk action movies I require to nurse through a full sick day. All for \$7.99.

Forget the ill-fated DVD service that was recently renamed Qwikster to keep the Netflix brand from obituary headlines and relegating it to body copy. I never cared

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for the by-mail service and, with a little patience, I have my own way of procuring hard copies if the programming necessitates immediate viewing.

I like how the focus has shifted to the “60 percent price hike” and not the actual dollar amounts. Your bank account will bleed an extra \$4/month if you want to retain both streaming and by-mail services. If you have the ability to stream content to your television via, I don't know, a Playstation 3, you can spare a fin (\$5) each month without great consequence.

I can justify \$4/month after I saw the Lion King in 3D for \$25. I spent \$25 dollars (on two tickets) for a nauseating dose of nostalgia — the music and script still amaze, the 3D conversion is trite — and more texting adolescents than my patience could handle. Did you know that it's still assault if you only smash the smartphone? Ridiculous.

The peer in question, Manufacturing.net managing editor Joel Hans, adds that the price increase warranted prior justification — added content, a much-needed uptick in content quality, faster service, etc. Given the current selection I don't believe any justification was necessary. The price bump was less than the monthly cost of the Showtime tier in premium cable packages.

The increase gave me a chance to reconsider how much I was paying, and I couldn't be more satisfied.

Netflix's failure is a sign of the company's youth — no company succeeds without occasional embarrassment — but I think the company comes out more focused on its core competency, streaming content. I never bought into the DVD-by-mail service, so I have no qualms regarding Qwikster's slow demise. I will remind those predicting the spin-off company's eminent and immediate downfall that Blockbuster still has brick and mortar throughout the nation (however bankrupt it may be), and while the tech-savvy may be quick to abandon “outdated” services, many will cling to DVD-by-mail, if for no other reason than fear of change.

At \$7.99 a month, streaming Netflix is the ideal content partner to which no competing service holds a candle. When you have a good partner, sometimes you need to pitch in to make sure both parties remain happy ... and solvent.

I understand if you disagree. If you do, I've compiled the below list of the bounty your \$7.99 savings will yield:

- Two drinks at happy hour.
- Two movie rentals, if you can still find a Blockbuster.
- A free movie from the library that is eight days overdue.
- Two pounds of salad.
- Eight cans of soup.
- A pack of cheap cigarettes.
- Two bottles of Chloraseptic after you realize that the cigarettes were a mistake.

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- Eighty packages of Ramen.
- 24 channels of in-flight entertainment on Frontier Airlines. (It's actually \$6, but it's an hour and fifty minutes of programming from Boston to Milwaukee.)
- Four movies streamed from YouTube.
- A cheap bottle of liquor to help cope with *Netflix loss*.
- Hulu Plus, if you refuse to re-up with Netflix based on principle.
- 2.4 gallons of gas.

What's your take? Email david.mantey@advantagemedia.com [3] or leave comments below.

Editor's Note: Netflix, Inc. has announced that it is abandoning its decision to separate its DVD-by-mail and Internet streaming services. CEO Reed Hastings said Monday subscribers will be able to use both services under one account and one password.

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