

Chapter 2

Streaming Revolution: Tracing the Evolution of OTT Media From Its Origins to the Present

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ABSTRACT

This chapter embarks on an engrossing journey, unravelling the transformational landscape of OTT media. It traces its humble beginnings to its disruptive force in the entertainment industry, exploring the impact on traditional media models. With on-demand content and cord-cutting on the rise, traditional broadcasters face challenges. Global expansion brings localized content and fierce competition between players, while technological innovations enhance user experiences with AI-driven personalization, VR, and AR. As the future of OTT unfolds, emerging business models and cutting-edge tech promise boundless possibilities. Understanding its historical context is vital, paving the way for an ever-evolving world of captivating entertainment.

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1. INTRODUCTION

OTT is a term used to describe the content delivery over the internet, bypassing satellite television providers or traditional cable. OTT services offer extensive range of content, comprising TV shows, movies, live sports, concerts and many more. Typically, OTT Content can be accessed through a subscription model, but some services also offer a freemium option with limited content (Adjust, 2020). The historical development of OTT media can be traced back to the early days of the internet where few independent websites were offering streaming video content. But, these services were limited by the slow speeds of dial-up internet. As broadband internet became more widespread in early 2000s, OTT industry began to take off. Netflix is considered to be the pioneer of OTT industry, which launched in 1997 as a DVD-by-mail rental service. Netflix began to offer streaming video content in 2007 and quickly became the company's primary business model. Other important OTT services have emulated Netflix's approach, with names like Disney+, Hulu, Amazon Prime Video and many other joining the fray. Over the past years, these platforms have experienced rapid development and emerged as significant players within the media industry (Matt, 2023).

The increase of OTT media has intense influence on media production and consumption. For consumers, OTT platform provide many advantages over satellite television or traditional cable. OTT services provide more option and are more budget-friendly where they allow audience to watch their desired contents on demand. For content producers, OTT platforms establish novel avenues for distribution, enabling large audience outreach and offering room for experimentation with fresh formats and genres (Swarnima, 2023). Grasping the history of OTT is fundamental to fully grasp its present status and the direction it headed in the future. OTT media is relatively a new phenomenon, but it has already had a major impact on the media and entertainment industry (Gupta D. S., 2019). As the popularity of OTT industry continue to grow, it is expected to have even greater impact on the way people consume media in the future. Here are major milestones in the development of OTT media (Sabharwal, 2018) (Hayes, 2018):

- 1993: RealNetworks launches the RealPlayer, one of the first streaming media players.
- 1995: DirectTV launches the DirectTV satellite television service, which offers a limited amount of streaming content.
- 1997: Netflix launches as a DVD-by-mail rental service.
- 2000: Apple releases the iPod, which helps to popularize digital video downloads.
- 2005: YouTube launches, becoming one of the first major online video platforms.
- 2007: Netflix begins offering streaming video content.
- 2008: Hulu launches, offering a streaming service that combines content from major television networks.
- 2010: Amazon Prime Video launches, offering a streaming service that is included with Amazon Prime memberships.
- 2015: Disney+ launches, offering a streaming service that focuses on content from Disney and its subsidiaries.

The historical development of OTT industry has been defined by prompt but continuous evolution in the media and entertainment industry. Though comparatively new, it has already made a considerable effect on the media industry. As OTT industry gain even more acceptance, their impression on media production and consumption is expected to grow further in the future (Frank Arthofer, 2016). OTT

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