

NEWS

Cox's Contour service makes entertainment personal

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"Not so fast, Netflix."

That's the message sent by Cox Communications' Contour service, which debuted nationally in August and offers iPad viewing, personalized recommendations and an improved DVR.

As consumers in recent years have left cable in favor of cheaper, "over-the-top" content providers such as Hulu and Netflix, which give recommendations and support mobile viewing, Cox's latest offering broadens its appeal, with the advantage of offering live and on-demand TV.

The service is three-fold, offering the Contour Guide, Contour app and Record 6 DVR. The Contour Guide saves up to eight user profiles and gives personalized recommendations based on viewing history.

"Like this?" the guide hypothetically asks. "You'll probably like that."

The iPad app suggests programs to users and allows them to save a queue of shows in "my Library."

On the app, users can watch 90 cable channels and thousands of on-demand videos on the app within their home's Wi-Fi range. With a tap of the iPad screen, they can push the show they are watching from the app to a TV screen in their home.

Away from home, customers can watch TV on channel-specific mobile apps, such as HBO Go or Watch ESPN.

Although the service is geared toward

the tablet-savvy, use of the app isn't necessary to use the improved DVR system.

While Cox's next-best DVR records three programs at once, and about 50 hours or high-definition TV, the new DVR records up to six programs at once and about 300 hours of HD programming, or 1,000 hours of standard definition viewing.

Contour requires preferred-level cable and Internet. The Contour TV package costs an additional \$24.99 per month with the Record 6 DVR or \$20 without.

CenturyLink, another local cable provider, offers Prism TV, which offers mobile viewing and DVR capability, but no recommendations or profiles.

Prism TV's DVR, which records up to four shows at once, can be managed from any TV in the house, allowing customers to pause a recorded show in one room and pick it up in another room.

This year, the company debuted its Wireless Set-Top Box, so customers can watch TV on a mobile device anywhere in the house, and the Prism on the Go app lets users watch TV in home, set DVR remotely and watch to-go apps. Prism ranges from \$39.99 to \$98.99 per month.

Cox began developing Contour after a study they conducted revealed that customers spent 60 percent of viewing time watching "convenience TV," or programming that can be called up at the viewer's convenience. Fifty percent said they use streaming video on TV and mobile devices.



PHOTOS by SAMANTHA CLEMENS/LAS VEGAS BUSINESS PRESS
Jonathan Brooks, senior marketing manager for Cox Communications, demonstrates the new Contour television service Sept. 12 at the Cox Solutions Store. The service allows for up to eight personalized profiles, a 2-terabyte 'Record 6 DVR' and an app for iPads.



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