

IN THE NEWS



AMAZON PRIME VIDEO OFFICIALLY COMING TO CANADA

Author: BILL HARRIS AND MARK DANIELL

Source: Toronto Sun

Date: 14/12/2016

TORONTO - The Amazon has overflowed, all the way up into Canada.

Canadians now have a new option when it comes to streaming, thanks to Amazon Prime Video.

Amazon announced Wednesday that it is bringing its video streaming service north of the border as part of a rollout in more than 200 countries and territories.

Amazon Prime Video is the home of such shows as the Emmy-winning *Transparent*, *Mozart in the Jungle*, *The Man in the High Castle*, *The Grand Tour*, Woody Allen's *Crisis in Six Scenes* and David E. Kelley's *Goliath* featuring Billy Bob Thornton, among others. And the Seattle-based company is promising even more original programming in 2017.

If you already are a member of Amazon Prime in Canada, you will be able to access the streaming service at no additional cost.

If you're new, membership will set you back \$79 per year after a 30-day free trial. The service also includes free same-day shipping for some orders (you know, books, Blu-rays, doodads) in Toronto and Vancouver.

The announcement comes after Shomi, the short-lived streaming service initiated by Rogers and Shaw, shuttered at the end of November.

Shomi, which launched in 2014, was the Canadian outlet for Amazon's *Transparent* and *Mozart in the Jungle*. But many of the shows on the Amazon docket — including some that are filmed in Canada — have not been available here previously.

The emergence of original programming on Amazon Prime in recent years had come to give Canadians the impression that they were falling behind, again. Even if you weren't particularly interested in any specific Amazon show, one thing that's certain is Canadians don't like being shut out of things. In fact, Canadians kind of believe they have a "right" to see and access all entertainment produced in the United States, which, of course, is not technically the case.

Anyway, the only streaming services that have a chance in today's world are the ones that are producing their own content. Netflix has become an entertainment behemoth. Amazon has intriguing shows and is growing.

In Canada specifically, Shomi failed because there's only so much "library content," and people aren't

excited anymore by past seasons of whatever. Meanwhile, Bell's CraveTV at least is trying to put up a fight, combining library content with some exclusive HBO and Showtime series, as well as the Canadian original (both literally and figuratively) Letterkenny.

But just last month, Bell Media president Mary Ann Turcke expressed concern about the possibility of Amazon coming into the Canadian market at a hearing before Canada's broadcast regulator. She said it could make it more difficult to acquire the buzzy titles needed to satisfy subscribers. The way around that, of course, is to make your own buzzy content, but if that were easy, everyone would be doing it.

"It's not just our fellow Canadian broadcasters who will try to outbid us for first run, original programming, but it's Netflix and now Amazon, two entities that are not subject to the same regulatory requirements as us and that have astronomically more buying power than we do," Turcke told the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission.

CraveTV reportedly has one-million subscribers, with Netflix rumoured to be in the homes of 48% of all English-speaking Canadians.

— With files from the Canadian Press