
APPLE TAKES A BITE OUT OF TELEVISION.

Apple hates to lose. The company co-founded by the late visionary Steve Jobs has a single-minded determination to win—and win outright. The one thing though that Mr. Jobs hated even more than losing was being second best.

A recent Wall Street Journal article quoted sources inside and outside of the Cupertino-based technology company—everything suggests the company is making a move to enter into the retail TV business with an Apple-branded television. The idea is to steer away from the traditional, standard set-top box. In true Apple style, nothing was specified, and none of the sources or people in the know could say for sure if the company that Mr. Jobs built is building a TV or not. The various sources did say enough, however, to point the intelligent observer in the right (but general) direction.

FOUR MAJOR POINTS STAND OUT:

- The new device will receive content via wireless streaming
- Senior VP Eddy Cue has been in talks with media bosses and content providers
- Mr. Cue is also talking about using technologies that would allow for content to be streamed on multiple devices in a system where media content can be started on one device and continued seamlessly on another
- Apple plans to shift focus away from traditional forms of media controls—such as the remote controller—and instead implement a new control scheme based primarily on voice commands and hand gestures

Even though initially there were positive numbers for Apple's set-top TV box, the device itself has not taken off in typical Apple style. However, added to the condensed version of the various allusions and non-statements, we can begin to develop an idea of what Apple has in store.

Wireless streaming is already a feature that Apple uses in its various devices to share media. Its AirPlay technology is built into all of its tier-one devices such as the iPhone and the iPad 2. It seems logical that they would continue to use their already established technology in the upcoming new device.

The fact that a Senior VP is talking to media heads is significant. It could mean that Apple intends to bring content providers onboard for a new Netflix-style, media-streaming service. If Apple were to go in that direction, they would surely continue to follow their pattern of having a "walled garden" or "walled ecosystem," which would allow them to bypass similar services offered by Hulu, Netflix, and Amazon, among others.

The ability to start consuming content on one device and seamlessly continue on another was one of the reasons Amazon's Kindle became so popular. Their Whispersync technology was soon appropriated by every other player in the industry and is now a feature that is not simply expected, but demanded by consumers in the e-book market. Amazon recently extended the feature to movies and other video content in its Amazon Prime service, a move that has been well received and very positively reviewed by critics. If Apple wants to be at the forefront, they not only need to have this feature but they also have to implement it as well as, if not better, than Amazon.

The final piece of the puzzle is most likely the most important one and the one thing that can in theory take Apple straight to the top of the pack. If Apple can pull off their intended voice-based control scheme—with the usual aplomb and style they have become known for—it will be more than just a 'cool, new' feature. It will be a paradigm-shifting accomplishment. It could be the one thing that could make consumers buy a TV that is not really a TV but essentially a really, **really**, big iPhone.