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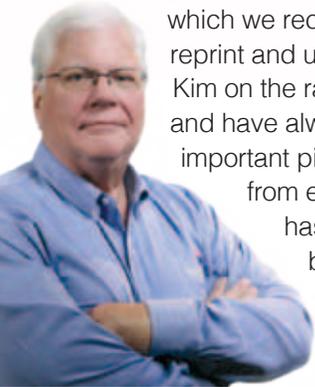
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CEO MESSAGE

Hello, everyone – thank you for reading our newsletter.

For this issue, I thought it would be a good idea to again review television viewing options as we leave the television business. I came across a great article by Kim Komando for which we received permission to reprint and use. I have listened to Kim on the radio for several years and have always picked up an important piece of information from every program. Kim has a great way of breaking down the complex into small bites that everyone can understand. Enjoy! – *Dave*



Pick Your TV Streaming Box Based on Your Viewing Habits

(This article is being reprinted from the December 24, 2018 issue of USA Today with permission from the author, Kim Komando. For more information, visit www.komando.com.)

Limitless content. Watch whatever you want, whenever you want. All you need to buy is one little box, and the monthly subscriptions are up to you. After decades of flipping through TV channels, many of us find the promise of internet-based television too miraculous to pass up.

Much of the streaming decision depends on what you want to watch. Here are some options and a comprehensive breakdown for each one.

Apple TV 4K

Pros: Compared with its competitors, the Apple TV 4K currently has the best
Continued on page 2



Home Dedication Ceremony for VTX1 HABITAT FOR HUMANITY HOUSE

VTX1 Companies and Habitat for Humanity of the Rio Grande Valley celebrated the completion of the first Habitat House in Raymondville at the home dedication on Wednesday, March 6. The house was built as a result of their partnership to help the Dominguez family's dream of owning a home become a reality. Along with a \$50,000 donation, VTX1 Companies contributed volunteer hours towards the construction of the house.

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hardware available in a streaming box, designed to effortlessly handle 60 fps 4K, Dolby Atmos and HDR content. It also has the cleanest and smoothest interface among the lot, delivering a minimal but polished experience all around.

Since it's an Apple product, it also works great with iPhones, iPads and Macs, and it's compatible with Airplay content streaming, Apple Music and other HomeKit appliances.

If you're already knee-deep in the Apple ecosystem, the Apple TV is a no-brainer. The 4K resolution will ensure its longevity, whether or not you have a 4K TV yet.

App-wise, aside from your purchased iTunes movies and music, it has all the essentials such as Netflix, YouTube, Amazon Prime Video, Vudu, Hulu, Plex, HBO, DirecTV Now, AT&T Watch TV and Sling TV. Plus, if you own digital movies across multiple services, they all can be synced via Movies Anywhere.

Cons: As you would have guessed, the Apple TV is relatively expensive. The included Siri touch remote also can be clunky and unwieldy. Additionally, if you're not into the Apple ecosystem and you don't own any other Apple gadgets, you won't be getting the most out of an Apple TV.

Price: \$179 for 32GB, \$199 for 64 GB

Roku Ultra

Pros: Even with increased competition from the tech giants, Roku remains the most popular brand in streaming players. Why? It's a service-agnostic platform, meaning it has apps from almost every content provider out there (except Apple and iTunes).

Roku has apps for Netflix, YouTube, Google Play Movies, Amazon Prime Video, Vudu, Hulu, Plex, HBO, DirecTV Now and Sling TV (sadly, no AT&T Watch TV app yet). Plus, it has hundreds of third-party video apps that offer free movies and TV shows. If you want to access the most content from various services available, then the Roku is the one for you.

For the nitty-gritty specs, the Roku Ultra supports 4K, HDR and Dolby Atmos, and it's even bundled with a pair of JBL earphones you can connect to its remote for wireless audio.

Cons: The interface can be slow, including the Roku Ultra, and the design is less attractive. Roku is clamping down on third-party apps. Since they update apps automatically, some of your installed apps can be deactivated without prior warning.

Price: \$99

Amazon Fire TV Cube

Pros: If you're building a smart home, and you're attracted to voice-controlled

electronics, you'll be pleased to know the Fire TV Cube has built-in Alexa functions. This means you can dim your smart bulbs, control your smart appliances, ask questions, set times – pretty much anything a regular Amazon Echo can do.

You also can use your voice to search, play, pause, fast-forward and handle all the things you would typically do with a remote.

You can even turn an HDMI-CEC compatible TV on or off and adjust its volume.

But don't worry if you have an older TV; the Fire TV Cube has a built-in IR transmitter, so you can use it as a universal remote and voice control on any TV, old and new.

As a bonus, since it's connected to a display, it also can duplicate the features of Amazon's Echo Show, the video-based version of Echo.

As expected, Amazon content is front and center on all Fire TVs; and it also has must-have apps such as Netflix, Vudu, Hulu, Plex, HBO, DirecTV Now, AT&T Watch TV and Sling TV. For video, the Fire TV Cube has support for 4K content, HDR and Dolby Atmos. Again, even if you don't have a 4K TV yet, if you're in the market for a streaming gadget, a 4K capable streaming box is worth it.

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Annual/Informational Meetings

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Hebbronville TV Winner



Raymondville TV Winner



Raymondville TV Winner



San Isidro TV Winner



Tilden TV Winner

continued from page 2

Cons: Like its apps, Amazon's Fire TV interface is cluttered with promoted content and is a pain to navigate. Alexa and voice-controlling a TV through the Fire TV Cube can be painfully slow.

Price: \$119

Chromecast Ultra

Pros: If you've ever owned a Chromecast, you'll know that they can be extra useful around the house. With this unobtrusive little gadget, you can cast or stream content from your iOS or Android smartphone or Chrome browser to your TV. You can even cast

your whole desktop if you want to.

Ultra is not a traditional streaming box like the others, because the device doesn't come with its own remote. Instead, your smartphone behaves like a remote for your Chromecast set-up, and you can stream content from compatible apps such as Netflix, Hulu, HBO Now, Sling TV, Plex and Vudu straight to your TV.

You also can integrate Chromecast with the Google Home, and with HDMI-CEC compatible TVs, you can have good (but limited) hands-free voice control. At about \$70, Chromecast

Ultra is one of the cheapest streaming gadgets to cast both 4K and HDR content.

Cons: Again, no physical remote. You will always depend on your smartphone or tablet to operate it. Amazon Prime Video and iTunes also are unavailable, which will deprive you of a lot of content

Price: \$69

You can listen to the Kim Komando Show on your phone, tablet or computer.



In recent months, the FBI and law enforcement around the country have investigated several hoax threats of targeted violence against schools and other public places. These threats — often issued via text message or posted on social media — are taken very seriously. Hoax threats are not a joke, and they can have devastating consequences — both for the public and for the perpetrators.

Issuing a threat — even over social media, via text message, or through e-mail — is a federal crime (threatening interstate communications). Those who post or send these threats can receive up to five years in federal prison, or they can face state or local charges. With a thoughtless remark on social media, young people risk starting out their adult lives in prison and forever being labeled a felon.

"The Bureau and its law enforcement partners take each threat seriously. We investigate and fully analyze each threat to determine its credibility," said FBI Deputy Director David Bowdich. "Hoax threats disrupt school, waste limited law enforcement resources, and put first responders in unnecessary danger. We also don't want to see a young person start out adulthood with a felony record over an impulsive social media post. It's not a joke; always think before you post."

In addition to consequences for individuals who issue threats, there is also a significant societal cost. Law enforcement agencies have limited resources, and responding to hoax threats diverts officers and costs taxpayers. The threats can also cause severe emotional distress to students, school personnel, and parents.

Here are a few examples of serious threats that the FBI and their partners have investigated:

- A young man in Texas used social media and a phone to issue threats against schools in Minnesota. He also called in fake hostage situations, known as "swatting." He was arrested, pleaded guilty, and was sentenced to more than three years in federal prison. He was 19 at the time of sentencing.
- A 21-year-old South Carolina man was sentenced to one year in federal prison after he sent text messages claiming there was a bomb in the parking lot of a Veterans Affairs Medical Center in the state.
- An 18-year-old North Carolina man was sentenced to 22 months in federal prison and was ordered to pay restitution after he broadcast himself on the Internet calling in bomb threats to various public places, including schools, colleges, and FBI offices.

What Should I Do?

- Don't ever post or send any hoax threats online...period.
- If you are a target of an online threat, alert your local law enforcement immediately.
- If you see a threat of violence posted on social media, immediately contact local law enforcement or your local FBI office. Members of the public can always submit a tip to the FBI at tips.fbi.gov.
- Notify authorities but don't share or forward the threat until law enforcement has had a chance to investigate—this can spread misinformation and cause panic.
- If you are a parent or family member, know that some young people post these threats online as a cry for attention or a way to get revenge or exert control. Talk to your child about the proper outlet for their stress or other emotions and explain the importance of responsible social media use and the consequences of posting hoax threats.



Make Life Easier with Alarm.com's Geo-Services

You may know that a smart security system gives you a safer, more secure home. You're aware that our smartphone app keeps you in control, in the know, and one step ahead of unusual activity.

But did you know just how helpful an Alarm.com-powered home can be?

Just take Geo-Services. It's an opt-in Alarm.com feature that does helpful things around your house when you're leaving home or on your way back.

It uses your smartphone's location on a digital map to understand where you are, and which direction you're headed. With a few simple Geo-Services rules set up in your Alarm.com dashboard, several things become easier.

1: Forgot to lock up? No problem.

Do you ever get that sudden suspicion—typically when you're 15 miles from home—that you left the garage open? Geo-Services can close it for you.

2: Save energy when you leave the house

An effective way to lower your energy bill is to set your thermostat up a few degrees when your house is empty. But when you're late for work or excited for a road trip, it's easy to forget.

A Geo-Services rule for your Alarm.com smart thermostat will take care of this forever. When Alarm.com sees that you're leaving (and that no one else is home), your thermostat will set up for automatic savings—until you ...

3: Come home to a cool welcome

On your way back home, Geo-Services works in reverse, ensuring that things are comfortable when you get there. As well as turning your thermostat back down, Geo-Services can turn on your smart lights as you arrive home. All you need to do now is open your Alarm.com app and let yourself in; no "doorway dash" required.

4: Pause your security cameras when you don't need them

When no one's home, you want to see the activity that your smart security cameras capture. When you're there, however, you don't need a video alert every time the kids run through the house.

Geo-Services lets you automatically pause any, or all, of your cameras' recording schedules when you're home. It's an easy way to conserve video clips and eliminate alerts that you don't need.

5: Customize your rules with multiple geo-fences

A single, circular geo-fence around your home won't time every task perfectly. For example, it takes longer to adjust the temperature than it does to turn the lights on.

That's why we made it easy to set up more than one geo-fence. For your 'coming home' rules, try creating a 10-mile fence to trigger your thermostat, with a one-mile fence for your lights. Once your fences are set up, you can use them for other rules, and customize them until they're perfect.

Want to make life easier with Geo Services and Alarm.com?

Geo-Services is included with most Alarm.com-powered smart home security packages, at no extra charge. Don't have Alarm.com yet? Contact VTX1 at **1-800-446-2031** or visit our website at **www.vtx1.net** to order your system today!

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Raymondville Christmas Parade



VTX1 Retirement Celebration – Raymondville



Pet Immunization Clinic – Raymondville Headquarters

Connecting in our COMMUNITIES

OTT TRAINING SESSIONS

These sessions were held in most of our exchanges to educate our members about alternative TV viewing options and how to use them.



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