

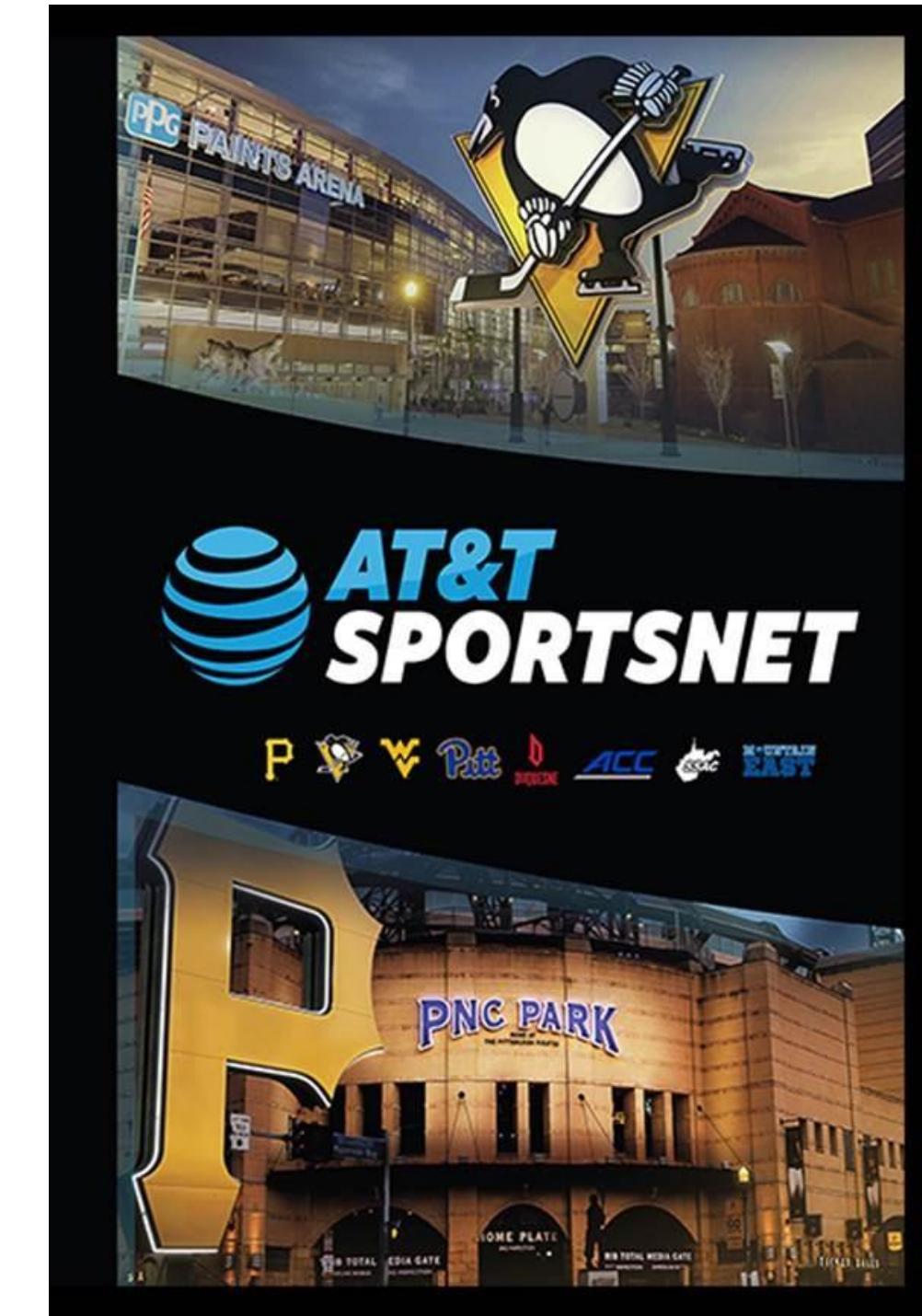
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February 18, 2020

Reuters
20 years after dot-com peak, tech dominance keeps investors on edge

YouTube is sending signals that it wants to become a destination site for every part of the TV universe.

The Google-owned video giant is considering giving people the ability to sign up, through YouTube, for a wide range of subscription-streaming services run by entertainment companies, according to

Bloomberg
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Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
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Philadelphia Inquirer
Pittsburgh
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Harrisburg Patriot-News
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Politico
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people familiar with the situation. YouTube has talked with several entertainment companies about adding their services, the people said. The status of the talks, which were held over the past several months, isn't known. A YouTube spokeswoman declined to comment.

Amazon and Apple have already waded into this area: Their video subscribers who want to watch a show on HBO, Sundance or various other services can easily sign up for those channels through the Amazon or Apple video portals. YouTube already allows people to sign up for a handful of such services, such as Showtime, through its YouTube TV streaming cable service. But the recent talks suggest YouTube plans to significantly expand the number of outside services available.

The services enhance the power of tech companies in streaming video, allowing them to play a gatekeeper role akin to that of cable operators in the traditional television world. Amazon was first to offer the feature, and its Amazon Channels service quickly became a major force in driving subscriptions of services like Starz and Showtime. Amazon Channels now offers more than 200 outside subscriptions.

Despite the potential of this market, Facebook has decided to abandon its own nascent version of a subscriptions offering. Facebook had tested the idea by offering lower-profile paid-video services, such as CollegeHumor and Tastemade, through the Watch tab of the Facebook app in the second half of last year. "We are constantly testing features that drive value for partners and people and launched a small subscription test in August. After evaluation, we decided to end the test," a Facebook spokesperson said. Facebook's change of mind comes as it has retreated from investing heavily in premium video for Watch, The Information recently reported.

YouTube's contemplation of a subscription offering comes as its foray into selling a streaming cable service looks to be gaining traction, even as some other players such as Sony have abandoned the market. Last week Google reported that its YouTube TV service, which offers live and on-demand cable channels for \$50 a month, had more than 2 million subscribers. That puts it behind Hulu's competing Hulu Plus Live TV service, which had 3.2 million subscribers as of Dec. 31, and Dish's SlingTV, which had 2.69 million as of last September. Hulu, though, got a boost from its decade-old on-demand service, which has 27 million subscribers, while Sling was first into the market, in 2015. YouTube TV and Hulu's Live TV both launched in 2017.

But profit margins in the business of offering packages of cable channels online are thin, thanks to high programming costs. All the services are trying to undercut traditional cable, which typically costs close to \$100 a month. In a sign of how tough the market is, two earlier entrants, Sony and AT&T, have pulled back. Sony shuttered its Vue service a few months ago. AT&T's AT&T TV Now—once called DirecTV Now—has lost half its subscribers thanks to price hikes. It had 926,000 subscribers remaining as of Dec. 31.

YouTube TV is at an advantage because it can tap YouTube and other parts of Google to help drive revenue and make up for the slim margins of the streaming cable service, said Brandon Riney, an analyst with Parks Associates. YouTube "can take on more risk and make up for it with revenue from other means," he said. "Also, it can

market its YouTube TV service to the millions of people who use YouTube.”

It is unclear if any new subscription offering would be tied to YouTubeTV or would be separate. But giving YouTube TV subscribers access to various other stand-alone subscriptions could help YouTube improve the profit margins on the streaming cable service. The profit potential of offering other companies' subscriptions is significant. Both Amazon and Apple take a cut of anywhere from 30% to 50% of the subscription fee. BMO Capital Markets projected early last year that Amazon would make \$2.6 billion from its channels product in 2019, growing to \$3.6 billion in 2020.

Getting into the market would also make YouTube a more potent rival to traditional pay TV as well as Amazon, Apple and Hulu. As it is, YouTube's core business, free video service full of TV clips and other videos uploaded by ordinary people, has become a major force in advertising. Google last week reported that YouTube generated \$15 billion in ad revenue in 2019, more than Fox, NBC and ABC combined. – *The Information*

With \$4 million in state funding, Pennsylvania is buying ads and preparing to award grants to nonprofit organizations, grassroots groups, and colleges to ensure that every resident is counted in the 2020 census. “We are making sure that we are counting everyone from rural, suburban, and urban areas in Pennsylvania,” said Norman Bristol Colón, executive director of Gov. Tom Wolf’s Complete Count Commission. “We also recognize that our state is more diverse than ever before, so we have to concentrate our efforts on the hard-to-count populations.”

The census is conducted every 10 years to count each person in the country. The information is used to determine each state’s share of billions of dollars in federal funding and number of U.S. House seats. For the first time, the U.S. Census Bureau is asking most people to fill out the survey online. Every household will be invited to participate by April 1.

The commission — a coalition of advocacy, education, housing, and religious organizations created by Wolf in September 2018 — originally requested \$13 million from the legislature for outreach efforts, a dollar for each Pennsylvanian. But lawmakers were hesitant to make an investment of that size, Bristol Colón said. “Finally, they recognized the important work that needs to be done, especially when it comes to the \$27 billion in federal funds we get through the census [each year],” he said. “They came back to the table and they provided us the opportunity to have the \$4 million to do the complete count.”

The funding was included in a voting reform package passed in 2019. Neighboring New York is putting \$20 million in state funding toward the census, while New Jersey and Maryland have appropriated \$9 million and \$5 million, respectively. The state has a \$2.5 million contract with Red House Communications to produce and place census ads through radio and television stations and in traditional print media, according to a Department of Community & Economic Development spokesperson. The state has also targeted Latinx and black news outlets, Bristol Colón said, as well as social media platforms.

The department is also reviewing applications for the \$1 million [**Census 2020 Outreach Grant Program**](#), which will award nonprofits, faith-based organizations, and higher-education institutions with up to \$50,000. The money will be used to target hard-to-reach groups through outreach efforts, including buying local media ads or sponsoring census-related events. The [**application process**](#) closed Feb. 14. The remaining \$500,000 in state census money “is allotted for miscellaneous expenses, including printed materials for communications purposes,” a department spokesperson said.

Hard-to-reach populations — a blanket term for such groups as minorities, immigrants, low-income earners, renters, farmworkers, and rural residents — are a priority for the state’s Complete Count Commission. Some immigrants can be [**hard to reach**](#) because of language barriers, mistrust in the U.S. government, and fear of repercussions, according to commission member and immigrants-rights group CASA.

Pennsylvania is home to a growing Latinx population, including Puerto Ricans who sought refuge in the state after Hurricane Maria in 2017. More than 10,000 people arrived in Pennsylvania after the devastating storm, according to CASA. President Donald Trump had sought to add a question about citizenship to the census, leading to concerns about an undercount of immigrant households, but [**ultimately did not prevail**](#). Pennsylvania second lady Gisele Fetterman, who was [**born**](#) in Brazil, is [**touring**](#) select counties to promote participation.

Although the survey is being offered online, [**Complete Count Committees**](#) — locally focused groups formed by municipalities or community leaders — are still depending on census workers to canvas areas. But finding workers to count these critical populations has been difficult. February [**data**](#) from the Census Bureau shows successful recruitment efforts in Pennsylvania’s largest counties, including Allegheny and Philadelphia. But several rural counties in the state are under 40% of the hiring goal. “It has been a great challenge for the Census Bureau to fill all the temporary jobs for census 2020 due to a low unemployment rate and the digital component to the application process,” Bristol Colón said. — *Philadelphia Inquirer*

