

# TechCrunch

by [Jason Kincaid](#) on November 25, 2008



[Sling Media](#), the company behind the popular Slingbox TV-streaming hardware devices, has opened the gates to its [video portal Sling.com](#). The site pits Sling directly against [Joost](#) and [Hulu](#) (though Hulu is a Sling partner), allowing users to stream a variety of television shows and movies for free through an intuitive Flash player.

Sling's selection of media is pretty comprehensive, offering content from most of the major networks and studios including Warner, Sony, and MGM (Sling is licensing some of its content from Hulu). The site also offers movies from a number of smaller sources, like [College Humor's](#) shorts. But there are a few notable exceptions: Comedy Central is nowhere to be found, which means *The Daily Show* and *Colbert Report* aren't available (Hulu [began offering](#) both shows in June).



Sling.com's biggest advantage over its competitors is its ability to stream content directly from any Sling boxes you own, giving access to both Live TV and premium content saved on your DVR. The service works very well, automatically detecting the contents of any Slingbox connected to your user account, and definitely makes me want a Slingbox of my own even more. That said, live content streaming from Sling.com won't be a gamechanger yet, as it still comes with too many caveats.

First, live streaming is only available for Windows machines at launch - an acceptable sin but one that is irritating nonetheless (a Mac version is on the way, and the rest of the site works fine on all platforms). But what really hinders the live playback is the fact that it requires a browser plugin. Ideally, Sling.com would allow users to watch their content from any computer that supports Flash, even if they didn't have the administrative rights required to download and install the native Sling application. Unfortunately this isn't the case. And while the browser plugin may be only a fraction of the size of the native install, it will still likely be restricted on most public computers, which makes it far less useful. Fortunately the plugin is only required for live playback, as the rest of the site uses a standard Flash player.

Sling is off to a good start - its interface compares well to Hulu and Joost, and its selection of content is impressive if not unique. Once it nails down its live streaming (hopefully with full Mac support and no plugin needed), it could turn into my site of choice for consuming video. But until then, most people will probably stick with what they know.

## [Sling Media](#)



**Website:** [slingmedia.com](http://slingmedia.com)

**Location:** Foster City, California, United States

**Acquired:** September 1, 2007 by [EchoStar](#) for \$380M in Cash

Sling Media is the maker of Slingbox, a piece of hardware that enables users to watch and control live television on their computers or cell phones. The Slingbox takes the video from cable, digital cable, satellite, or DVR programming and sends it to... [Learn More](#)

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