

From the TechnoManor

I'm not much for watching television. That might surprise you given I'm a technology guy. I'm even less a fan of TV, since all I have are "rabbit ears." So, when I hear about TV programs that sound interesting (either from friends or radio programs), I get an itch.

I realized recently I can satisfy that itch through the Internet. Yup, TV programs can be found in various corners of the Web. As part of some research for this article, I found episodes of *The Time Tunnel* on the Web. (It's a sci-fi show I watched when I was in grade school, and it's still pretty hokey).

So, what good is watching TV on the Web? Well, a few things come to mind:

- You can watch programs on your schedule...and you don't need a TiVo (digital video recorder) or VCR. You can even dredge up programs from your distant past!
- You can watch programs on your laptop computer...wherever you can get an Internet connection.
- Most of it is free, although you still have to put up with commercials.

What do you need to watch TV on the Web? A recent-model computer, something you purchased within the last 3 or 4 years will do. You may be able to use older computers, but you may also be disappointed with the results. You also need a high-speed broadband Internet connection, such as cable, DSL, or Verizon's FIOS. If you connect to the Internet using a dial-up modem, you will be painfully disappointed.

Does your computer need any special software to watch TV on the Web? Yes, but in most cases, you already have it. Web sites use Adobe's Flash, Microsoft's Windows Media Player, or Apple's Quicktime to play the TV programs. I talked about Flash in my January 15, 2009 column. All Windows PCs come with Windows Media Player. Most PCs also have Quicktime pre-installed (or visit www.apple.com to download). If you watch TV programs from Netflix, you need to download software from Netflix before you can watch the TV program.

Why would you want to watch TV on a computer monitor? Well, that's the downside of TV on the Web. In many cases, you may not want to do this. Some of the programs appear in postcard-sized windows on your computer monitor. Others can be enlarged to use the entire screen, but they look grainy.

If you're looking for a big-screen experience, TV on the Web isn't there yet. If you're like me, who spends a lot of time sitting in front of a computer monitor, watching TV on the Web is the next logical step. It's also a good diversion!

Where can you find TV on the Web? Following are a few sources I've stumbled on:

www.hulu.com – A good source for a lot of...stuff. To see what *The Colbert Report* was all about, I came to hulu.com. I also found *The Time Tunnel* here when browsing through the Science Fiction section. If you're a parent, and you manage your children's TV viewing, you may want to keep an eye on your kids surfing to this Web site. There are programs on this site meant for a mature audience.

www.pbs.org – You can watch many of the TV programs that air on PBS (e.g.,

FRONTLINE or *NOVA*). This is an example of what makes the Web a good resource.

www.netflix.com – If you have a Netflix subscription, you can watch some of the movies and TV series on your computer. The quality is very good. I must confess, I watched a few of the original *Star Trek* episodes here.

www.youtube.com – I thought I could watch TV programs here, but not really. It looks like you can watch clips of TV programs, but not entire episodes (unless members uploaded them). I included YouTube in the list to be complete.

I made this week's article brief. I'm part of the set-up crew for the North Texas Irish Festival. So, while I'm away, send your Celtic techno questions to:

frenchygrey@gmail.com

I'll answer one each week in *The Link*, and may the Luck O' The Irish go with ya!

Dave Gillen