

YouTube Frees Up Content For Viewers But Turns to Ads For Revenues

YouTube confirmed plans to make its Originals series and specials free and ad-supported, eliminating the paywall for a period of time.

During YouTube's annual Brandcast event on Thursday, Chief Business Officer Robert Kyncl revealed the new strategy will be implemented starting this year with original programming containing an ad-supported window moving forward.

After the initial 30-day trial to watch Originals, the membership to YouTube's Premium subscription club currently charges \$11.99 per month.

"While every other media company is racing to put their content behind the paywall, we're headed in the opposite direction by making our original content available for free," said Kyncl.

The video-streaming platform will host the first season of 'Karate Kid' follow-up 'Cobra Kai' for free for about two weeks, from August 29 to September 11. Thereafter a new episode from season two of 'Cobra Kai' will be released weekly for global viewership at no cost. A documentary about Paris Hilton, expanded Lollapalooza coverage and YouTube's first interactive special, "A Heist with Markiplier" are among the other scheduled projects.

Earlier in November, the company announced the shift in their business model and original programming budget reduction to take effect in 2020. However, the company's continuous struggle in attracting enough viewers to shell out the Premium monthly fee has therefore brought forward the free Original's content to the public much sooner. The business' Single Slate free-window strategy is enforced to better monetize its original productions via ad revenue, across its 2 billion-plus monthly customers.

"Prime time is now personal, and it's happening on our cellphones. Every one of us has a new prime time," says YouTube CEO Susan Wojcicki on how advertisements will single-handedly sustain Originals.

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