

Amazon Prime Video streaming content to include 'limited advertisements'

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Subscribers to Amazon's Prime Video streaming service will start seeing commercials in films and TV shows from early next year unless they pay an extra £2.99 for an ad-free experience. The company said customers in the UK and Germany would begin to see "limited advertisements" in its streaming content after 5 February. Prime Video users in the US will start seeing adverts from 29 January. Rivals Netflix and Disney have already introduced cheaper ad-supported streaming packages in an attempt to win over cost-conscious consumers worried about soaring household bills. However, Amazon's tier with ads is not cheaper and customers will have to instead pay more to watch without. The large streaming companies have adjusted their business models after the post-pandemic slowdown in subscriber growth, seeking to shift loss-making services to profitability by introducing ad tiers, raising prices and cutting spending on content. In an email to Prime Video members, Amazon said the move would allow the company to "continue investing in compelling content and keep increasing investment over a long period of time". Amazon said it would not swamp viewers with messaging, saying that it would have "meaningfully fewer ads than ad-supported TV channels and other streaming TV providers". The company revealed earlier this year that it planned to follow its rivals and roll out advertising in countries including the UK, US, Germany and Canada. Amazon's Prime subscription, which includes access to its music and video streaming services and perks including free and fast delivery on packages, costs £8.99 a month in the UK. The company said it would not be changing the price of the service next year, unless customers opted to pay the extra for the ad-free option. Netflix, which began to roll out its ad tier in late 2022, has said that it has about 15 million customers globally now signed up to it. The streaming company charges £4.99 a month for the basic tier, significantly less than its £10.99 standard ad-free package. Disney+ charges £4.99 a month for its service with ads, which launched in the UK in August, or £7.99 for its standard ad-free package.