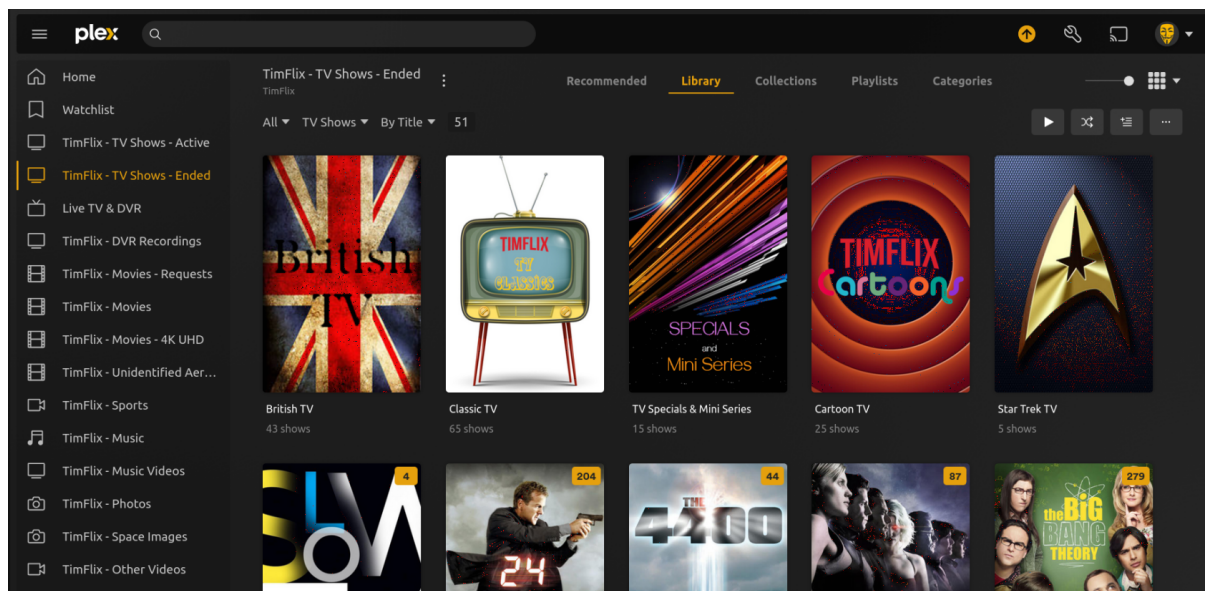# Plex

Plex orginally was a Media Server that made it possible to stream your personal media remotely. While it still provides that service, it has evolved, for better or worse, into a streaming platform of its own. Something akin to NetFlix or Hulu with native ad supported offerings.

If you have a collection of media, Plex enables you to stream all that stuff from a computer or server onto your TV or smartphone. And while you can use Plex for free, a lot of its best features, especially media server related features, require a paid subscription to Plex Pass.

> " On a personal note, I don't really like "sharing" my media server user interface (UI) with content from another source, even if it is Plex itself. Granted Plex as a

> media server is excellent, but there are a number of issues starting to pile up since they decided to become a streaming platform themselves.

There are a number of pros and cons for Plex as it is today. Here is my list:

Plex Pros	Plex Cons
Supports a wide variety of server and client platforms and devices.	Extremely limited UI customization. User interfaces can vary greatly from one platform to another.
Hardware transcoding is excellent	Limited ability to access your media locally from your Plex server if your Internet is down. This is due to Plex's cloud authentication. You have to be able to sign-in to Plex via the Internet to access your local server. DLNA is Plex's solution to this, but it is a horrible experience as you must rely upon 3rd party client side DLNA apps. Roku's DLNA client sucks, for example.
Efficient use and decent monitoring of device resources	No support for eBooks or audio books
Loads of community support	Most of the popular media server specific features, such as hardware transcoding, downloads, mobile sync, DVR recording, music lyrics, skipping intros and credits, custom sharing restrictions and bandwidth and transcoding limits require a paid subscription or a lifetime membership.
Supports Live TV and DVR options (we are talking locally, not Plex's own offerings)	Android and IOS mobile apps require a fee
Very good database management and backup options	No ability to grant friends access to your local Live TV unless you make them part of your Home account (which lists them with your home users every time you login)
Regular updates and patches	User management is a pain. Used to be able to go to an intuitive user menu and make changes to any user, friend or home user. Now you have to go to two menus, Plex Home & Manage Library Access to manage users. You used to see your users full email address as their username on your server. Now it is some truncated semi-readable name. You have no ability to change the name of your user's accounts to something human friendly. If you use Tautulli you can change those truncated email/usernames there, but it won't show up in Plex that way.

	New libraries on your Plex server show up at the bottom of your user's menus. Requiring them to re-pin and change the order of their menus anytime there's a library addition or change.
	For example, if I add a new library (or change the name of an existing library) to my Plex server and grant users access to it, they won't necessarily see it without pinning it to their menu (which means they probably won't ever know it's there).
	If they do know about it and go looking for it; it will be at the bottom of the list instead of where it ought to be (with the other libraries from my server).

> " After paying for a Plex Pass lifetime subscription years ago, I find I don't really care for the direction Plex has taken. With little or no say in how my media server is used by Plex, I am actively seeking a replacement. So far, **JellyFin** is in the lead as a replacement for Plex.

With that said, if you want an alternative or supplemental streaming service, Plex has an attractive list of free offerings. However, if you want a Home Theater media server or a media server you can completely control and share your libraries with friends and family, you may want to look elsewhere.

Installation

You can find all the installation instructions and downloads for Plex here:

Plex Downloads

Plex Official Docker Installation

Plex Media Server Installation Guide