# The Most Popular Media Servers

## The Most Popular Open-Source Media Servers

The most popular open-source media servers are:

- **Plex**
- **Jellyfin**
- **Kodi**
- **Emby**
- **MediaPortal**
- **Universal Media Server**
- **OSMC**

## A Feature Comparison

The media server features we will compare are:

- **Server Platforms** - The device type(s) where you can install the media server software. The server platform can also be its own client as with a Home Theater server. The server platforms are *different* than the client platforms.
- **Client Platforms** - The device(s) that can access your media server remotely. In some cases, there is no separate client application. The server software itself must be installed on any device you wish to access your media library. In this case the client platform will be "self".
- **Hardware Transcoding** - This indicates if the media server supports hardware transcoding. Transcoding is a process media servers use to convert a video or audio file into a different format so it can be accessible to a wide range of devices. Software transcoding is CPU intensive so to offload the transcoding process to a dedicated piece of hardware with its own CPU is preferable for best performance.
- **Local Access without Internet** - Some media server software requires you to setup an account with the developer. In some cases, you have to sign-in using your account to access your media server libraries even if the server is local.
- **Music / Sync** - This indicates if the server supports a music library and/or the ability to download or sync content.
- **Photo / eBooks** - This indicates if the server supports photo libraries and/or an electronic book library.

- **Live TV / DVR** - This indicates if the server integrates Live TV  and/or has DVR functionality. Usually via an over-the-air (OTA) or cable peripheral tuner card for the media server or a network OTA/cable appliance such as a **HD Homerun**.

| Media Server | Server Platforms | Client Platforms | Hardware Transcoding | Local Access without Internet | Music / Sync | Photo / eBooks | Live TV / DVR | Subscription |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Plex | Linux, Windows, Docker, NAS, Nvidia Shield, Western Digital My Passport Wireless Pro, NETGEAR X10 router | Android, IOS, Web, Roku, Amazon Fire TV, Apple TV, Android TV, Chromecast,LG, Samsung, VIDAA, Vizio, and Hisense Smart TVs | Yes[1] | No[2] | Yes / Yes | Yes / No | Yes / Yes[1] | Free / Paid |
| JellyFin | Linux, Windows, MacOS, Docker | Android, IOS, Android TV, Roku, Apple TV, WebOS (LG Smart TVs) | Yes | Yes | Yes / Yes | Yes | Yes | Free |
| Kodi | Windows, macOS, Linux, Android, iOS, Raspberry Pi | self | No | Yes | Yes / No | Yes / Yes[3] | Yes / Yes | Free |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Emby | Windows, macOS, Linux, Docker, NAS | PC or mobile browser has full playback capability.<br><br>The following clients are supported with a paid subscription:Windows, Linux, MacOS, IOS, Android, Fire TV, Android TV, Roku, Apple TV, LG and Samsung Smart TVs, XBox, PS4 | Yes[1] | Yes | Yes / Yes[1] | Yes / Yes | Yes[1] / Yes[1] | Free / Paid |
| Media Portal | Windows | Self, Android, IOS | Yes[3] | Yes | Yes / No | Yes / No | Yes / Yes | Free |
| Universal Media Server | Windows, macOS, Linux, Docker | It is able to stream videos, audio and images to any DLNA-capable device | Yes | Yes | Yes / No | Yes / No | No / No | Free |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OSMC | Windows, MacOS, Linux, Raspberry Pi, and Vero (OSMC's flagship appliance) OSMC did support Apple TV but it will no longer received any updates as it has been deprecated. | self | No | Yes | Yes / No | Yes / No | No / No | Free |

[1] A paid subscription is required for this feature

[2] Local access to your Plex server without Internet is possible by activating the internal DLNA server. This must be done while you have Internet access as it requires you to sign-in to your account to change the configuration. You won't be accessing your Plex server via the standard UI however. You will need to have a DLNA client to do that. Roku has a DLNA app in its app store and there are several available for the PC, such as VLC.

[3] Supports this feature if using an add-on or plug-in

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