



What's on the box? **More choice**

Magic Numbers

179

THE AVERAGE TIME (MINUTES) AUSTRALIANS
NOW SPEND WATCHING TELEVISION EVERY DAY

5 OF THE MOST MEMORABLE TV EVENTS

Sometimes live television outstrips anything we could download. Here are five of the most watched television events.

1. The terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre Twin Towers, September 11, 2001
2. Neil Armstrong's first steps on the Moon on July 20, 1969
3. The 1997 funeral of Princess Diana
4. Gough Whitlam on the steps of Parliament House after his sacking
5. The O.J. Simpson freeway police chase in Los Angeles





WIRELESS TV

DOWNLOADING from your computer on to an USB stick you then use in your telly too fiddly? Apple TV and Boxee Box modules allow you to see everything you want to watch — movies, photo slideshows and more — wirelessly on your widescreen TV.

A network cable connects your computer and the module and, when you select the Apple TV or Boxee Box option, you get a choice of top movies, shows you've previously downloaded and Australian content including live sports and tv shows. An Apple TV costs \$129 and Boxee Box, which claims to have higher definition, costs \$179 and, whatever programming you buy, you pay for. But movie rentals for a new release start from as low as \$4.99 and you

have access to them for 30 days and can watch them as many times as you like.

Mr Crandon says these devices simplify downloading content off the internet, especially for those who are less tech-savvy, and, in the case of movies, represent better value than the video store, especially for those who live out of town.

TOP-RATING TV SERIES ON DVD

Why wait a week for the next episode of your favourite show? DVD stores says these box sets are all hot rentals with fans.

- **Downton Abbey**
- **Mad Men**
- **The Sopranos**
- **True Blood**
- **Underbelly**
- **Six Feet Under**
- **The Wire**
- **Deadwood**



TVs with 3D capability, network connections, USB ports and an array of video inputs are already on the market. But, this year, we'll also see internet protocol television that we will plug in to a network cable instead of plugging into an antenna, physically streaming all our content to its screen.

— Dan Crandon, of Living Entertainment North Coast.





TV undergoing radical changes

WORDS: **Helen Hawkes**

“GOOD evening and welcome to television”.

Since those words were used to launch TV in Australia, in 1956, we’ve had an enduring love affair with the box.

But the way we are watching television is undergoing a radical change.

Rather than settle for what’s scheduled, we’re streaming or downloading our favourite shows or movies from the internet and watching them when we choose, or hiring entire series from our local video store and working our way through them at our leisure.

We’re also using our TV screen for gaming and social interaction on sites like Facebook.

“Originally we had very little viewing choice,” said Professor David Rowe, director of the Institute of Culture and Society at the University of Western Sydney.

“We had one, cathode ray TV and we sat down together to

watch a limited number of free-to-air channels.

“Now we have multiple LCD or plasma TVs in our homes, numerous channels, digital broadcasting, subscription programming and more.

“The actual piece of hardware doesn’t matter so much anymore. Content is the key.”

At the same time, as overall viewing time by a wide spectrum of viewers continues to increase, TV is no longer the poor cousin to the cinema screen but a mecca for big-name talent.

An increasing number of film stars – Jeremy Irons, Steve Buscemi, Kathy Bates, Clare Danes, Sally Field and Laurence Fishburne to name a few – are transitioning to the small screen.

It’s all good news for viewers and not such bad news for the networks, who are now choosing to advertise on social media or, increasingly, through product placement, Prof Rowe said.