

Streaming Media

By Karen Zhang

流媒体 (Streaming Media) 是指采用流式传输的方式在Internet播放的媒体格式。流媒体又叫流式媒体, 是边传边播的媒体, 是多媒体的一种。它是指商家用一个视频传送服务器把节目当成数据包发出, 传送到网络上。用户通过解压设备对这些数据进行解压后, 节目就会像发送前那样显示出来。流媒体的出现极大地方便了人们的工作和生活。比如在地球的另一端, 某大学的课堂上, 某个教授正在兴致盎然地传授一门你喜欢的课程。你只要在网络上找到该在线课程, 课程一边播放一边下载, 虽然远在天涯, 却如亲临现场! 除了远程教育, 流媒体在视频点播、网络电台、网络视频等方面也有着广泛的应用。

Do you like to tune in to your smartphone radio station when you are waiting for the bus? Do you find it more convenient to watch your favorite TV drama on demand? Now streaming music is a trendy topic in America.

Just as its name suggests, media is delivered to you—the ultimate user—like a nonstop stream. If you click on any media player on the internet, such as a radio station website or a news agency homepage, you can hear or see a live broadcast.

In America, music streaming is popular these days. The launch of Apple Music, a 24/7 global radio, speaks for itself. Users download the application onto their iPhones and they can pick up any genre of music anytime, anywhere. However, after a three-month free trial, users need to pay a fee for the use of Apple Music. Of course, there are plenty of other free music streaming services available.

Looking back, from vinyl^[黑胶唱片] to cassettes, from CD to the MP3 and to today's streaming, music

Karen in America

consumption habits are changing significantly. Statistics show that in 2014, Americans streamed 164 billion songs. That is almost half a billion per day, or about 514 songs per person in America over the course of the year.

I am still a CD fan when it comes to listening to music. But I must confess that I am now hooked on TV drama streaming. If I have the time, I will watch several episodes online in one sitting. In the old days, people would tape their favorite TV shows and watch them later at their leisure. Now, with video streaming, viewers can watch their favorite shows on the internet on demand. And as far as I know, there are many video streaming services in China, too.

In my own experience, I find video streaming helpful, especially when I want to attend a lecture or a book launch given by prestigious^[享有声望的] figures, but I simply don't have the time or the venue^[地点] is too far away. Some event organizers will post video streams on their websites, so people like me can watch the event as it happens or watch the recorded video afterwards.

Streaming media is very profitable. No wonder Alibaba will launch an online video streaming service soon in China, hoping to get the lion's share of the market.

