

How to watch TV online



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All the main terrestrial television channels – BBC, ITV, Channel 4 and Five – and satellite broadcaster Sky, and cable broadcaster Virgin Media - have their own ‘video on demand’ websites that allow you to watch online programmes that have already aired. This service is often called ‘catch-up’. There are also websites on which you can watch TV as it happens. Here’s how.

You’ll need:

- a computer with a soundcard
- a broadband internet connection
- speakers.

This guide is based on a PC running Windows 7 and Internet Explorer 8, but the steps in this process are very similar for Mac users or if you’re using a different browser, such as Chrome/Firefox/Internet Explorer 9/Safari, etc.

Follow these step-by-step instructions to watch TV on your computer

Step 1: Which programme would you like to watch? You’ll need to select the website for the right channel. Check out our article [How to watch BBC programmes online](#) for full instructions on how to use the BBC iPlayer.

Here are others you might try:

- [4oD \(Channel 4\)](#)
- [Demand 5 \(Five\)](#)

- [ITV Player](#)
- [Sky Go](#)
- [Virgin Media](#)
- [Blinkbox](#)
- [Netflix](#).

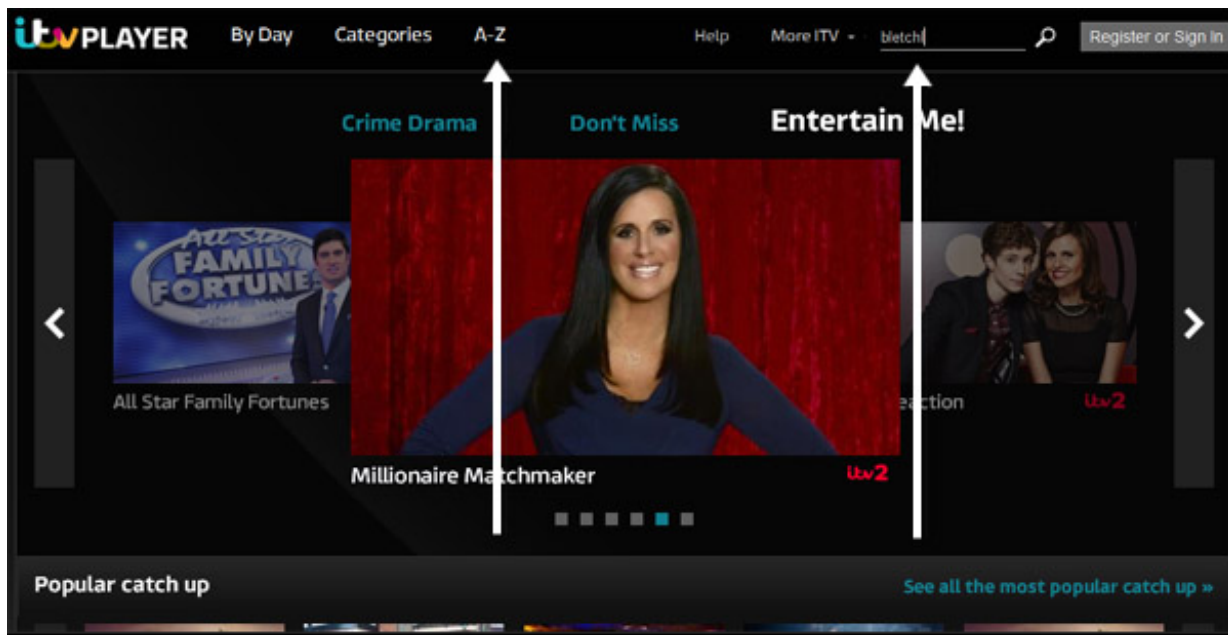
Some Sky programmes are free to watch even if you're not a subscriber, but you have to register first to get a Sky ID.

Here are some sites not attached to particular channels, where you can watch TV for free:

- [myeasytv.com](#) – watch programmes from the UK and the US
- [TVCatchup](#) – catch up TV from over 20 channels.

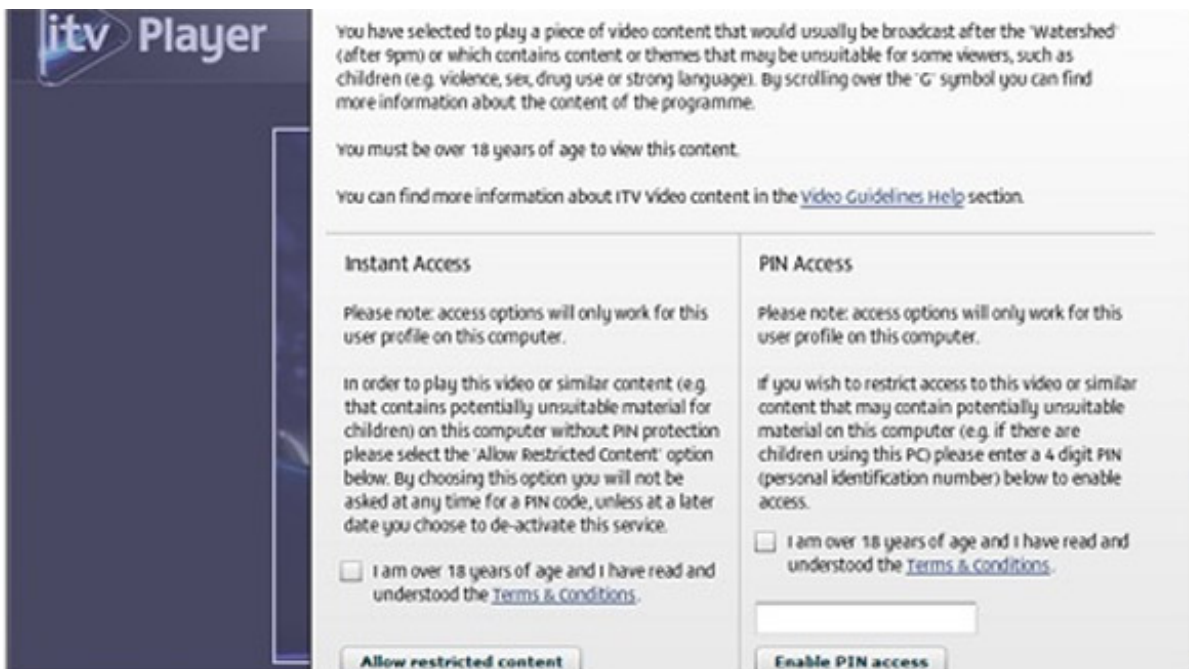
Step 2: Make sure the speakers connected to your computer are turned on.

Step 3: Let's start by finding a programme on ITV Player. Go to <https://www.itv.com/itvplayer/>. Find the programme you want to watch in the search box or find a particular programme through the A-z search. All the sites allow you to browse their listings to find a programme or search for one by typing its title into the search box.



Step 4: A simple click on the programme's title or the accompanying image will usually be enough to start it. You may have to sit through some adverts before it actually starts.

For some post-watershed programmes (after 9.00pm) you may have to confirm that you're over a certain age. You may be able to set a PIN number that only you can use to access these programmes, to ensure that children can't.

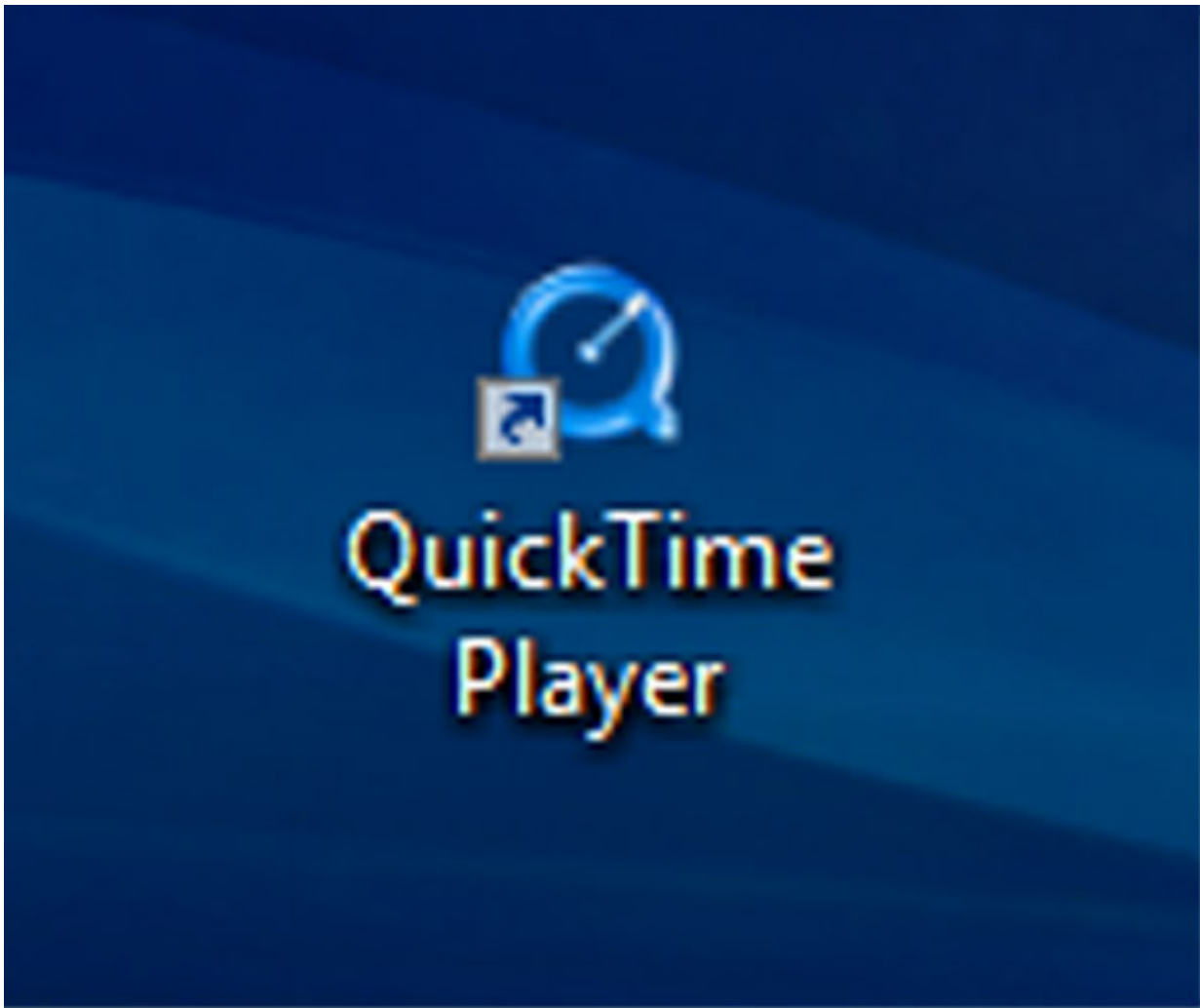


Step 5: You'll find some simple controls on the screen. With these, you can pause a programme, increase or decrease the volume, make the picture larger, possibly add sub-titles, and so on.



Step 6: If you're having problems with the programme 'stuttering' (pausing on its own), your broadband connection may not be fast enough. In that case, it might be better to download the entire programme to watch later. BBC iPlayer lets you download programmes to the [BBC iPlayer Desktop](#) to watch for a limited period. You can use our online guide to help you with this. Other websites such as Virgin Media don't allow downloads, and others such as 4oD (see *below*) – use Apple Quicktime and Apple iTunes to download TV shows. These are not time limited, but you do have to pay. You can use our online iTunes guide to help you download iTunes.

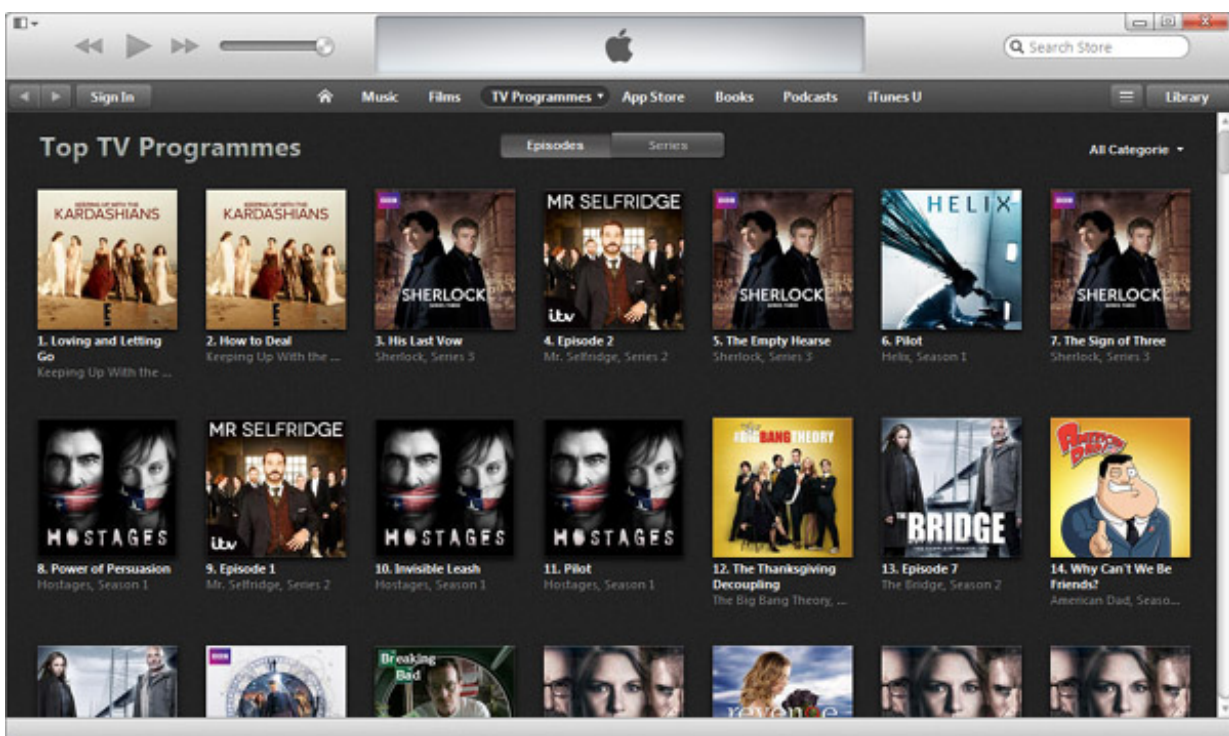
Step 7: Once you have Apple Quicktime and Apple iTunes installed, to download a programme that is available, click on the **Quicktime Player** logo on your computer desktop.



When the Quicktime window opens, click **Download on iTunes**.



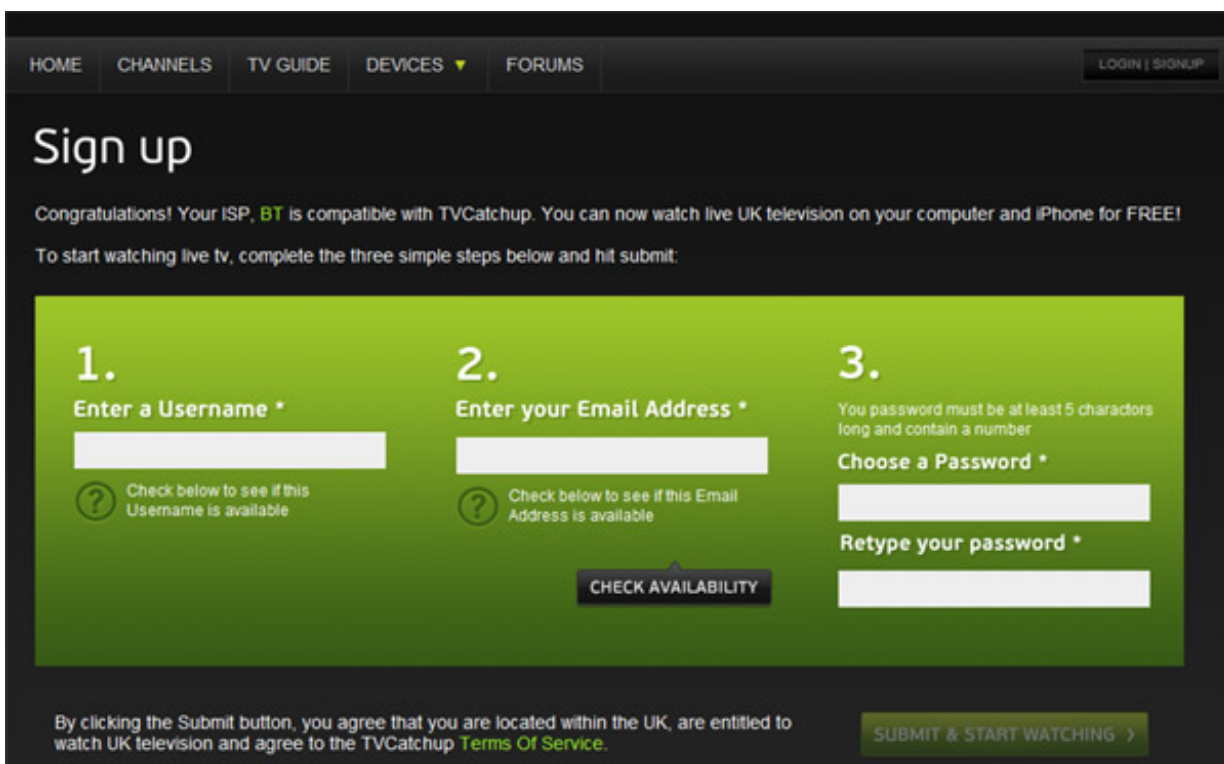
You'll be taken to the iTunes store where you can browse or search for the programme you want to download. You can choose to download one or more single TV shows, or a series.



Step 7: To watch live TV on your computer, you'll need to sign up to a service like TVCatchup (see **Step 1**), and to complete a registration form.



Once you've signed up, you'll be able to log in to the site.



You'll find more than 40 channels to choose from. If your broadband speed is likely to be an issue, you should opt for the 'low quality' option (you may have to add some information to your profile).



Once you've selected the quality stream you're going to watch, you simply click the channel you want and the programme will start immediately. If your broadband is still struggling, you could try closing any other internet pages as well as your email program, to maximise your connection rate.

Jacklyn Williams is a Digital Unite tutor.

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