



# Self-Hosted Media Server

Jellyfin or Plex? Cheaper than Netflix + every streaming sub. Your library, every device.

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| <b>\$100+</b><br>SAVED /MO VS STREAMS | <b>2-100 GB</b><br>PER MOVIE (4K) | <b>10-50×</b><br>HW TRANSCODE SPEEDUP | <b>QuickSync</b><br>INDIE SWEET SPOT |
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## Jellyfin vs Plex vs Emby

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| <b>OPEN SOURCE</b><br><b>Jellyfin</b><br>Free, open, every platform. Solid UI. Hardware transcoding free. Best for technical users. | <b>Plex</b><br>Polished apps + UX. Plex Pass (\$5/mo or \$120 lifetime) needed for HW transcode. Family-friendly.<br><b>Premium</b> | <b>Emby</b><br>Middle ground. Premiere \$5/mo. Good but smaller community. |
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## Hardware tiers

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| <b>Pi / old laptop</b><br>1-2 streams, mostly direct-play. | <b>SWEET SPOT</b><br><b>Intel mini PC w/ QuickSync</b><br>\$200-\$400 used. 3-5 concurrent 4K transcodes. Where most users land. | <b>NUC + discrete GPU</b><br>5+ concurrent 4K. Heavy households. | <b>DIY NAS</b><br>For 20+ TB libraries with ZFS / RAID. |
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| <b>PRO TIP</b><br>Encode your library in widely-compatible formats (H.264 1080p with AAC audio) to maximize <b>direct play</b> — free of CPU cost. Hardware transcoding is the fallback, not the default. | <b>LIBRARY STRUCTURE</b><br><div><div>1</div><b>Movies/Title (Year)/Title (Year).mkv</b><br/>Scanner recognizes by folder pattern</div> <div><div>2</div><b>TV/Show/Season 01/Show - S01E01 - Episode.mkv</b><br/>Standard naming = automatic metadata</div> <div><div>3</div><b>Music/Artist/Album/Track # - Title.flac</b></div> <div><div>4</div><b>Audiobooks/Author/Book Title/file.m4b</b></div> | <b>REMOTE ACCESS</b><br><div><div>1</div><b>Tailscale (recommended)</b><br/>VPN in; server stays private</div> <div><div>2</div><b>Plex Remote Access</b><br/>Built-in proxy for Plex specifically</div> <div><div>3</div><b>Reverse proxy + TLS</b><br/>Caddy / Traefik — be careful</div> |
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| <b>LIBRARY SIZING</b><br>4K movie: 30-100 GB. 1080p: 2-10 GB. Real libraries: 5-50 TB. Use NAS-class drives + ZFS / RAID6 if you can't afford to re-rip. |
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Full guide: [djenterprises.ai/blog/self-hosted-media-server](https://djenterprises.ai/blog/self-hosted-media-server)