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But users shouldn't expect the iPad to simulate a laptop or desktop computer's full range of professional video options. The Web site for the CBS network, for instance, will stream only one TV show, "Survivor," on the iPad on Saturday, even though the site streams many other shows online in Flash form. CBS says other TV shows will be made available for iPad viewing later.

The hurdles are partly technical, primarily involving the conversion from Flash. But there are business reasons for the restrictions, as well. Some media companies want to encourage people to pay for television episodes and films through Apple's iTunes store rather than streaming them free through the Web browser.

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sodes at this time, according to an NBC official who was not given permission to comment.

The Walt Disney Company, which counts Steven P. Jobs, Apple's chief executive, as its largest individual shareholder, appears to be embracing the iPad more fully than its TV counterparts. The ABC app will stream about 20 series, and will link to the iTunes store for paid downloads. Disney will release seven other apps for the device. No Fox shows will be accessible via the Web when the iPad goes on sale, but a spokeswoman said the network would "continue to evaluate the platform." Many Web sites have raced to convert their video files from Flash to HTML5, a different computing standard. And Netflix, the popular movies and TV subscription service, is expected to release a free streaming app for subscribers on Saturday, the day the device goes on sale, according to a person briefed on the plans.

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