

Attitudes towards Video and TV: Inc Impact of COVID-19 - UK - August 2020

Report Price: £1995.00 | \$2693.85 | €2245.17

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“Whilst COVID-19 has driven spikes in viewing time across all platforms, the wider backdrop of falling live television viewing minutes, declining advertising revenues and competing attentions from other media are making for a challenging backdrop for linear broadcasters.”
 – **Joe Birch, Consumer Technology Analyst, 27 August, 2020**

This report looks at the following areas:

- **The impact of COVID-19 on the television and video market.**
- **How consumers' viewing preferences will change in the short, medium and long term.**
- **Opportunities to tailor video and TV offerings to consumers' changing habits.**
- **How a COVID-19 recession will reshape consumers' attitudes to television and video viewing.**

The services which consumers have used to watch live TV have been shifting for a number of years, but the switch to streaming services this year has gained significant momentum, with use of free streaming services such as iPlayer or YouTube to watch live TV up from 30% last year to 42%.

COVID-19 has undoubtedly accelerated this shift, with television viewing across all platforms up nearly a third (32%) in April on the same period for 2019, according to Ofcom. Public Service Broadcasters (PSBs) have recorded some high viewing figures for news events during the pandemic, but subscription video-on-demand (SVoD) services such as Netflix, Disney+ and Amazon Prime have been the key beneficiaries. The ongoing effects of COVID-19 will mean a slow return to theatres and cinemas; cinematic releases online first will increase appeal of the streaming services.

In the immediate term, television is well placed to handle the change in personal circumstances which consumers find themselves in as wariness about going out and experiencing social activities such as theatres and cinemas drive consumers to watch content at home first. Post-pandemic, the economic downturn may see consumers switching off from pay-TV services and, to a lesser extent, streaming subscriptions, as the economic downturn bites.

Longer term, television services will likely benefit from the period of lockdown as new habits formed in this period can be sustained. 3m consumers accessed a paid-for streaming service for the first time during lockdown, and this behaviour switch can be maintained as consumers find value in their new service. As consumers increasingly become interested in personal curated content for their interests, opportunities for content-specific streaming services such as sports and documentaries can cater to the diverse needs of the super fan, and would likely see the landscape for streaming content become more segmented according to individual preference.

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BBC launches group viewing tool with an eye on delivering more immersive content

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Quibi launches streaming platform during coronavirus lockdown

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BBC launches group viewing tool with an eye on delivering more immersive content

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Nearly half think the licence fee should be stopped

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