



HOW YOUTUBE FARED IN CANADA IN 2020

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Children and their parents remain a big audience for the platform and many turn to it for music over other audio streaming options.

Media Technology Monitor (MTM) has released the results of two national surveys that paints a picture of how YouTube viewership fared in Canada during the year of the pandemic. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the platform is popular with Canadians of all ages, especially kids. But its subscription service remains mostly unwatched.

MTM conducted two surveys among English and French-speaking Canadians this year — one in the spring among more than 4,000 people and one in the fall among more than 8,000.

Overall viewing went up... duh

Just before the spring lockdown, YouTube viewership seemed on-par with Fall 2019's numbers; among Canadians 18+ who were online, about 77% reported past month usage. But two in five YouTube users reported higher-usage between the spring and fall of 2020.

That probably isn't terribly surprising, but the study does note that "past month adult YouTube [viewers] now report that they are more likely to watch via their computers than their smartphones," although it does not provide exact statistics on that change.

The kids are watching

The under-18 population remains a huge portion of the 2020 viewer base; 65% report daily usage and 31% report weekly viewing. In the 18+ segment, those proportions are only 59% and 27%, respectively.

YouTube Kids, the platform's child-dedicated content hub, currently has 60% awareness among adults, and 43% of those under 18 access content through it. "Usage is primarily driven by the YouTube Kids app rather than the browser-based version," the report says.

Approximately 82% of Canadian children report past-month viewing (compared to 77% in the over-18 crowd). In comparison to SVOD and linear TV, "YouTube sees higher levels of popularity among those aged 7 and up," the report states.

But parents are frequently watching alongside their kids. With kids age two to six, 97% of their parents watch YouTube with them. Among seven to 11-year olds, it's 90% of parents co-viewing, and in the 12-17 category, 79% of parents watch along. "The amount of time parents or guardians watch YouTube with

their kids declines with age, while the amount of time kids spend with YouTube increases with age. As time spent with the platform increases, feasibility of co-viewing with a parent or guardian decreases,” the report notes.

The study notes that gaming is the most-watched genre of video among boys 2-17, while music tops the list for girls. And speaking of music...

YouTube is a music service

About two-thirds of Canadian adults used YouTube to listen to music in the past month, which outpaces dedicated music services such as Apple Music and Spotify. Thirty-eight percent of online Canadian kids report monthly music listening, “making it slightly less popular than music streaming services (46%) for these younger individuals,” the report says. Music tends to increase in viewership among boys and girls the older they get.

Premium lags the pack

Despite the popularity of YouTube’s ad-supported free content, the ad-free subscription option YouTube Premium has not caught up to platforms such as Netflix or Amazon Prime Video in terms of adoption. Among the eight paid platforms in MTM’s study, YouTube Premium ranked second to last at only 4% of surveyed Canadians signing up. Netflix leads with 63% of Canadians 18+, followed by 24% for Amazon Prime and 19% for the relatively new Disney+. The Canadian-born Crave falls fourth at 16%.