



Growing number of Canadians cutting traditional television, CBC research shows

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A growing number of Canadians are ditching their traditional television subscriptions, according to a new CBC research report.

The May 2015 report said more than half of Canadians currently without cable television have "cut the cord," meaning they had a television subscription and cancelled it.

"With the prevalence of TV content on the internet and Netflix, Canadians are seeing less need to have a TV subscription," the report said.

Sixteen per cent of Canadians don't pay for a traditional TV service, up from 12 per cent three years ago, the report said.

'People have realized that if they're a light TV viewer, they can get what they need on the internet'- Mark Allen, senior director of corporate research, CBC/Radio-Canada

"We consider it a big jump," said Mark Allen, senior director of corporate research at CBC/Radio-Canada in Ottawa. "People have realized that if they're a light TV viewer, they can get what they need on the internet."

Allen said cord-cutters are finding other ways to watch their favourite shows and some believe they were paying too much for television.

Marjie Lynn was looking for ways to save money when she decided to cut ties with her television provider.

"We're the average Nova Scotian family, living paycheque to paycheque to paycheque and...you look at things that you can do, and one of those was cutting off cable," said the educational assistant in a recent interview from Hantsport, N.S.

"With the wonders of Netflix and online streaming... you can basically achieve all the TV watching that you want."

The report also said a fifth of television subscribers were interested in cutting the cord, with a third already having taken steps towards that end.

Allen said whether or not the number of cord-cutters continues to rise will depend on how much choice Canadians have in the future to watch television online and the success of the CRTC's "pick-and-pay" and "skinny package" rules for television providers, which become mandatory in December 2016.

"Up until this point, cord-cutters have been light TV viewers," said Allen. "But there are a lot of new over-the-top services that are making it easier for people, like Netflix and in the U.S. there are things like HBONow.

"It will depend on how the over-the-top options roll out and whether they are available to Canadians."

Language divide

The report also shows a divide among anglophones and francophones, said Allen.

Twenty-three per cent of anglophones said they were likely to cut the cord eventually, compared to 14 per cent of francophones.

"Quebecers have had access to pick-and-pay for almost a decade, and we haven't seen the same amount of cord cutting," said Allen. "That could be a contributing factor."

The report is based on phone and online surveys conducted in the fall of 2014 with more than 8,000 people across Canada.