



## **One-third of Canadians watch TV online, CRTC says Report includes look at use of online services like Netflix**

By Laura Payton, [CBC News](#)

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CRTC chairman Jean-Pierre Blais says more Canadians than ever are watching and listening to broadcast content on their computers. One third of Canadians watched television online in 2012, according to a new report by the CRTC, a trend likely driven in part by the growing popularity of services like Netflix. (Graham Hughes/Canadian Press)

One-third of Canadians watched television online in 2012, according to a new report by the CRTC, a trend likely driven in part by the growing popularity of services like Netflix.

The CRTC's annual Communications Monitoring Report, which looks at trends in pricing, finances and consumption in the country's telecommunications sector, says 33 per cent of Canadians watched television on the internet in 2012, with typical users watching three hours per week. That's up slightly from 2.8 hours in 2011.

Six per cent of Canadians watched programming on a tablet or smartphone, while four per cent report watching television programming exclusively online, the report said.

"It is interesting to note that Canadians' habits are evolving. More Canadians than ever are watching and listening to content on their computers, smartphones and tablets, yet the vast majority of programming is still accessed through traditional television and radio services," said Jean-Pierre Blais, CRTC chairman, in a news release about the report.

While conventional broadcasters have to follow CRTC rules, including broadcasting a certain percentage of Canadian content, online broadcasters aren't governed by the CRTC, so have more freedom.

The most striking number may be the number of Canadians that the CRTC says are subscribers to video-streaming service Netflix: 17 per cent in 2012, up from 10 per cent in 2011. But even that number appears to underestimate the number of Netflix users: the data is sourced from 2012 numbers by Media Technology Monitor. MTM issued a report in July, 2013, that suggested about 25 per cent of anglophone Canadians had signed up for Netflix.

The MTM research was based on surveys with 2,013 adults between March 6 and April 14 and considered accurate within plus or minus 2.2 percentage points 19 times out of 20.

About 84 per cent of the respondents who used Netflix said they typically watched at least one movie or TV show on the streaming service every week, MTM said.

Netflix, which launched in Canada in September 2010, no longer discloses how many Canadian customers it has. It last reported it had reached one million subscribers in August 2011.

### **CRTC no longer 'gatekeepers'**

Peter Menzies, the CRTC's vice-chairman, addressed the increase in online TV watching in a speech Monday to an industry group.

"We're looking at a communications environment that is radically different from what it was only 10 years ago," Menzies said, according to a prepared text posted on the CRTC's website.

"Since then, the structures, the business models, the products and the technology of the industry have been dramatically transformed — to say nothing of the needs, the tastes, the expectations and the behaviour of consumers," he said.

Menzies said the CRTC's framework has evolved in response to changes in technology, industry economics, and the interests and choices of Canadian consumers.

"But the overall result has been a complex system of rules built on an old foundation that was never designed to support them," he added.

Menzies said access to the internet means the CRTC "can no longer define ourselves as gatekeepers in a world in which there may be no gates."

The CRTC has to ask itself, he said, how to "act as an enabler of Canadian expression, rather than as a protector?"

"We can't tell Canadians what to watch, nor should we. They are free to enjoy a much wider range of information and entertainment than ever before," he said. "And they are."

Canadians are also turning to the internet to stream radio: 20 per cent of Canadians streamed radio online in 2012, with 14 per cent streaming audio content on a smartphone, 13 per cent streaming a personalized internet music service and eight per cent streaming audio on a tablet, the report said.

It all added up to 20.1 hours per week spent online for anglophones and 13 hours a week online for francophones, according to the CRTC.