

Reality Bites: how Gen Xers consume media

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Anglophone Gen Xers in Canada, which is to say adults aged 43 to 57, are tech-savvy. They grew up with personal computers. A recent Media Technology Monitor (MTM) report explores whether these characteristics are reflected in their media consumption habits and device ownership. Gen Xers make up nearly a quarter of the Canadian population (24%). Over half (53%) attended university while 30% attended college or chose occupational training. Six in 10 Gen Xers report a household income of approximately \$75K.

Looking at their device usage, more than three-quarters of Gen Xers (76%) own a tablet compared to 69% of younger and 68% of older anglophone adults. They also average higher than other adults in terms of game console ownership (61%). Computer ownership is high among Gen Xers at 94% but it's also high among younger (96%) and older (86%) Canadians.

Almost all Gen Xers (94%) own a smartphone, which is similar to younger adults (98%) but higher than older demos (79%). Smartphone brand preferences are similar across generations with Apple iPhone leading with 53% of Gen X, followed by 36% of Samsung owners. Google Pixel (4%), LG (2%) and Motorola (2%) are well behind.

More than four in five Gen Xers have a connected TV and at 81% they are on par with younger anglophones (80%) but more likely than older anglophones (59%) to own this type of device. A majority (71%) of Gen Xers subscribe to traditional TV while 18% of Gen X watch TV content exclusively online. Over half of Gen X subscribes to three or more SVOD services. Gen Xers are also most likely to subscribe to both linear TV and SVODs (63%) compared with younger (49%) and older anglophones (58%).

Netflix is the most popular SVOD subscription for Gen X (75%), followed by Amazon Prime (65%), Disney+ (44%) and Crave (29%). They are also watching AVODs (89%) and more FAST channels (24%) such as Samsung TV Plus.

Among Gen Xers gamers, Nintendo Wii is the most popular console, followed by Nintendo Wii U, Nintendo Switch and Xbox 360. Gen X plays games on mobile devices (46%), more than twice as much as they do on a gaming console (22%) or computer (15%).

The internet is the main source of media content for Gen Xers. They spend more than three times as many hours consuming media on the internet than on TV – roughly 35 hours vs about 10 hours.

Gen Xers own smart speakers (44%) with roughly the same with frequency as younger adults (43%), but more than older adults (27%). A large majority (87%) of Gen Xers use their smart speaker to access online audio. More than three-quarters (81%) use social media and are avid consumers of online AM/FM radio (87%), streaming music services (83%) and online news. The preferred news source for Gen X online news readers (80%) are news broadcaster websites or apps and are more likely than younger and older anglophones to use online news aggregators. Gen Xers skew lower than younger anglophones in terms of accessing news through social media at 40% vs 58%.

Gen Xers use social media (81%) compared to younger adults (89%) and older anglophone adults (55%). The top three social media platform are the same across age groups: Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp.