



Paid TV subscriptions have stayed mostly stable in Canada

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The latest Media Technology Monitor data looks at how Canadians consume streaming content through their TVs, and the audience is booming. Despite persistent fears of “cord cutting,” the latest report from Media Technology Monitor (MTM) finds that paid TV subscription on the whole have been relatively stable in Canada.

Paid TV subscriptions have only gone down slightly over the last five years, with 71% of respondents currently subscribing, compared to 73% in 2018. Cable remains the most popular service type at 32%, though fibre optic TV had more year-over-year growth – 21% of respondents in 2021 to 28% in 2022. Satellite TV continues to slip but still reaches 11% of households. Predictably, satellite TV subscriptions continue to be most common in smaller communities that haven’t historically been served by cable and fibre optic infrastructure. But preferences for paid service types also vary among key demographics. Cable subscriptions are more prevalent among older viewers, while racialized Canadians are more likely to have fibre optic TV subscriptions compared to the national average. Persons with disabilities and new Canadians also tend to have higher rates of cable subscriptions.

Those over 65 are most likely to have a paid TV service at 87%, made up of cable (43%), satellite (17%) and fibre optic (27%). The second age group most likely to have paid TV, at 80%, is the 50-to-64 segment with 37% having cable, 13% with satellite and 30% with a fibre optic service. Atlantic Canada (77%) is the province with the highest penetration of paid TV services, followed by British Columbia (75%) and Ontario (72%). The report shows that 11% of respondents have never had a paid TV service, while 18% of those who previously had a TV service have cancelled it. One-fifth of 18-to 34-year-olds are choosing not to subscribe to a TV service.

Despite the stability in recent years, cable is still expected to decline in popularity in the coming years due to the increasing availability, though it might not be due to cord-cutting. MTM expects some subscribers to be lost to streaming services, but also to fibre optic as infrastructure expansion is fueled by the demand for faster internet speeds. A reason streaming may not lead to more cord-cutting is because 59% of respondents have both paid TV and SVOD subscriptions. Only 19% exclusively rely on SVOD, though only 12% rely solely on paid TV. While the number of SVOD subscriptions have surpassed paid TV subscriptions, respondents still report spending more time watching paid TV services.