



WHAT DO PEOPLE DO WHEN THEY AVOID ADVERTISING?

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When a commercial hits their TV screen, more than half of Canadians look for something else to do.

That's according to a new MTM report aims to profile what Canadian adults do when TV and video ads come during the programming or online content they're viewing.

When a TV commercial comes on, 53% seek out a new activity, be it leaving the room for a snack, taking a bathroom break or staying in the room and just doing something else, while 45% of viewers turn to another screen such as a smartphone. Roughly two in five Canadians say they skip commercials via a device like a PVR.

Despite the above, the sound might still be on, so the message can still be passed on.

Only 35% of Canadians who watch TV say they simply watch the commercial. Virtually nobody said they turn off the TV.

TV viewers under 50 are more likely to turn to second screens during commercials, while men are more likely to change the channel during a commercial than women. Anglophones are 23% more likely to just watch the commercial than Francophones, who are more likely to leave the room and do something else.

In recent years, advertisers have looked towards advertising on online videos, in places such as TV network websites, YouTube, and social networks. Frequently, users will see ads play automatically at the beginning of the videos they are watching. For videos longer than a couple of minutes, often ads will be placed in the middle as well – sort of like a TV commercial.

Four in five online video viewers click "Skip ad" as soon as they can. Although people step away when a TV commercial comes on, few do so during an online ad, since having the device in hand makes it harder to step away compared to a TV set. A quarter of people aged 18 to 34 say they mute the sound on the ad – nearly twice that for those aged 50-plus. They are also nearly three times as likely to switch to another tab than are those over the age of 65.

Some platforms, such as YouTube, force ads to run for several seconds before the user will be able to skip, so there is still a captive audience to get the message across, quickly. Some advertisers even put together very short ads to make sure the full message is delivered. While for TV doing something else was the most common activity, very few people said they do something else when an online ad comes up, instead waiting for the timer on the skip ad button to run out. Only a sixth of online Canadians simply watch the full ad.

Over two-fifths of online Canadians, predominantly men, have downloaded or used an ad blocker. Younger internet users are more likely to be using these ad blockers, as are men and anglophones. Heavy internet users who are online for 40 or more hours per week are also more likely to use ad blockers.