

Americans' TV Time Will Grow for First Time Since 2012

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eMarketer Editors

US TV viewership and time spent is getting an unexpected bump as people continue to stay home due to the coronavirus pandemic. But once shelter-in-place measures relax, we expect both to decline again, according to our latest forecasts.

In 2020, the number of traditional TV* viewers will grow by 8.3 million to 287.3 million, the first time viewership has seen positive growth since 2011. While older TV viewers are driving most of the increase, all age groups posted some growth. Total viewership fell again in 2021.

TV Viewer Growth in the US, by Age, 2019-2022

% change

	2019	2020	2021	2022
0-11	-1.5%	2.0%	-4.1%	-1.4%
12-17	-2.2%	2.0%	-4.9%	-1.5%
18-24	-4.0%	2.8%	-4.9%	-1.9%
25-34	-3.2%	4.3%	-3.1%	-1.6%
35-44	-3.8%	3.1%	-4.2%	-1.9%
45-54	-4.4%	2.0%	-5.6%	-2.9%
55-64	-2.2%	1.8%	-3.8%	-3.3%
65+	0.6%	4.9%	-0.2%	1.0%
Total	-2.4%	3.0%	-3.5%	-1.5%

Note: individuals who watch live or recorded video on a television set at least once per month; includes DVR and other prerecorded video such as video downloaded from the internet but saved locally; excludes digital

Source: eMarketer, April 2020

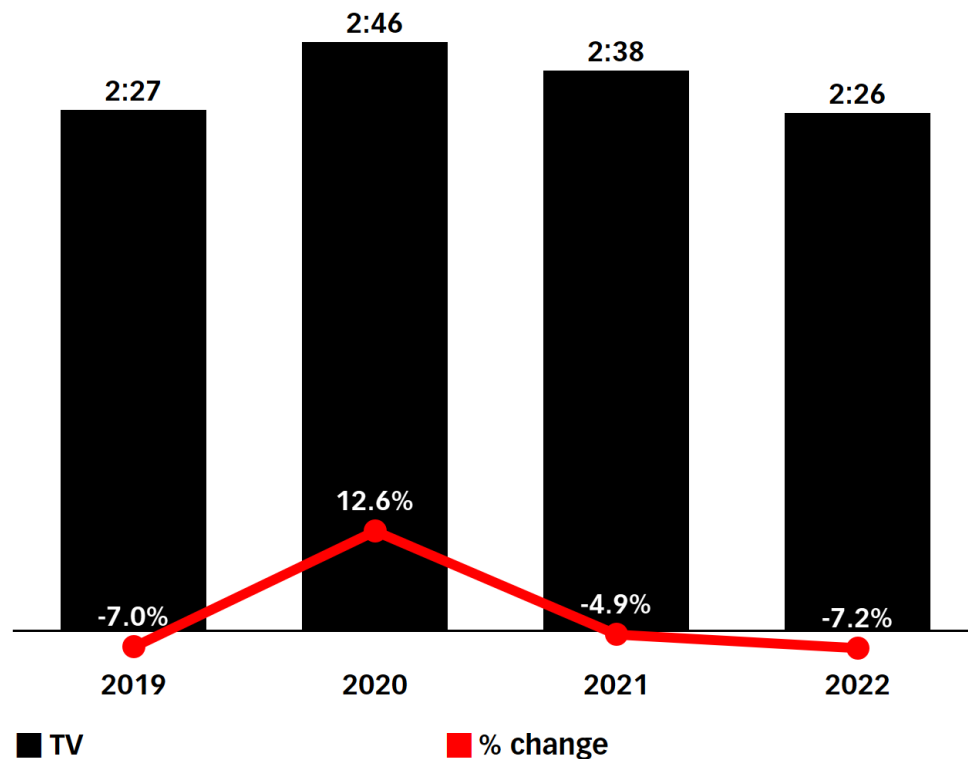
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More people are watching TV and spending more time doing so. We expect average daily TV viewing time among Americans to grow this year by 19 minutes to 2 hours, 46 minutes per day. This is the first time since 2012 that time spent with traditional TV will grow. Our previous forecast from Q4 2019 expected TV time to decline this year to 2 hours, 20 minutes.

TV: Average Time Spent in the US, 2019-2022

hrs:mins per day among population and % change



Note: all ages; includes live, DVR, and other prerecorded video (such as video downloaded from the internet but saved locally); includes all time spent watching TV, regardless of multitasking; excludes digital
Source: eMarketer, April 2020

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"Consumers will undoubtedly be fixated on their TVs more in 2020 due to stay-at-home orders, continued interest in up-to-date news on the pandemic and increasingly, more leisure time due to increasing unemployment rates," said eMarketer forecasting analyst Oscar Orozco.

The 2020 boost will not last beyond the pandemic, however. Once things return to normal, we expect TV time to continue its downward trajectory. By the end of 2021, we project daily TV time among Americans to decline by 8 minutes to 2 hours, 38 minutes per day. Coming off the 2020 bump, this will be higher than the 2 hours, 12 minutes per day that we previously forecast for 2021.